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Dragon

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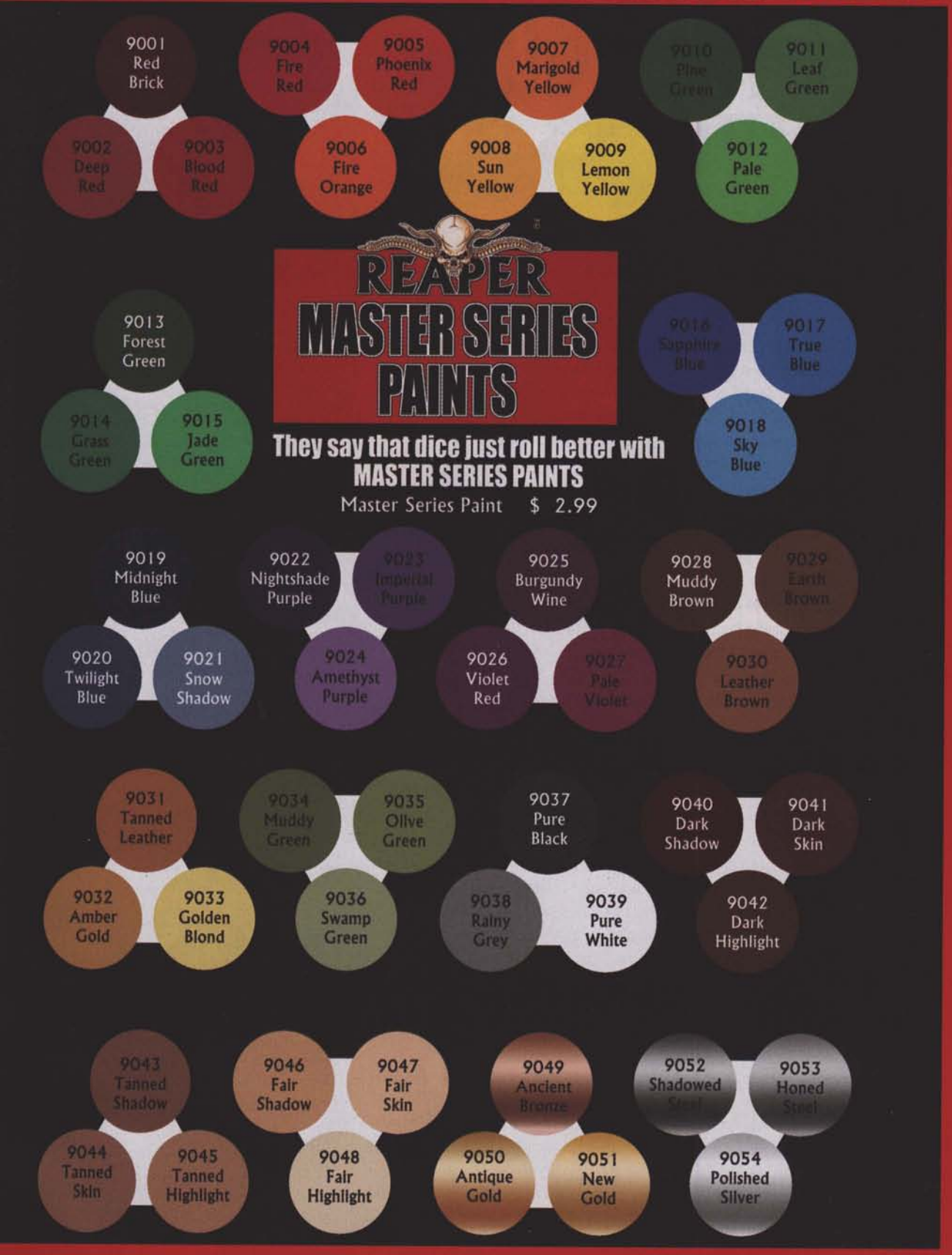

REAPER MINIATURES REAPER

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I'M A NICE GUY (REALLY!)

At last week's game, my wizard character, Barbatos Kem, decided to leave his companions to engage in a side quest that will take an entire month of game time (which might keep him off camera for a couple of months in the real world). It's not that I was bored of Barbatos—I adore him more and more with each session—but rather that I'm extremely self-conscious about dominating play time with quests that might interest only me and my character.

So a new character is in order. Before I sat down to create him, I did a mental survey of other characters I've played over the last decade or so. The results were enlightening, and not necessarily in a good way. Roll the Rogue's Gallery!

Ellund Torvin: Ellund was a true neutral fighter who had been known, in other times, as the Strike in Darkness, a peerless assassin who worked for the highest bidder. My approach was to play Ellund as Erik Mona unfiltered. He was my id on parade, a cavalcade of pithy insults and cleverness I would never dream of inflicting on people in the real world. He was also a hell of a lot of fun, and a capable companion despite the attitude.

Ghorus Thoth: Tired of always being on the front lines, I next decided to create Ghorus Thoth, an acerbic ascetic lawful neutral cleric of Jergal, the FORGOTTEN REALMS's god of fatalism, proper burial, and tombs. With a host of necromantic spells and a history entwined with the Red Wizards of Thay, Ghorus was the life of the party. He was the ultimate straight man, and I still miss playing him. But he was nobody's best friend.

Zophas Adhar: Finally, a good guy! A paladin, in fact. Zophas was a lawful good aasimar paladin with a Charisma in the stratosphere and the good looks to match. But he also belonged to an orthodox rural sect that believed all gods other than his were demons, which made just about everyone Zophas met a potential demon worshiper.

Barbatos Kem: My most recent character is a chaotic neutral wizard who spends his free time editing a propaganda broadsheet that libels several of the city's most respected nobles. He's currently saving money to purchase a haunted brothel inhabited by a monstrous beast named the Cobbled Man whom he befriended with a *philter of love*. He dabbles in dark magics and greatly respects many of the party's monstrous enemies.

And I haven't even mentioned Malagash Unosh (the sniveling alienist), Ephendus Thal (the unlikable cohort), or Truan Iolavai (the ruthless half-elf rogue). All these guys, in one way or another, were major pains in the ass.

But I didn't create them to be difficult. I thrive on intra-party conflict for the roleplaying opportunities it presents. Eventually, these characters all "turned a new leaf" (or died before they could), which was the whole point. I want characters who go on both literal and figurative journeys. By the end of the campaign, I want them to have grown.

But now that Barbatos has left his friends, I'm going to try to create a genuinely good character, a friend to one and all. I suspect my friends will think I'm trying to play a trick on them. And they may be right.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON

APRIL #330

DRAGON gives you the best in gaming, presenting new official rules, original game content, great advice, and the perfect inspiration for your D&D game. In each issue, you'll also see what cool products are on the horizon, find out what other players are up to, and get an insider's look at the industry. Get more from your game: Get *DRAGON*!

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by Keith Baker

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GAMA WIZKIDS

LETTERS

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Please include your name, city, and state.

PSIONICS?

How is it that you introduce material at exactly the right time? *Groundsmoke* from "Cantrips and Orisons of the Academy of Apprentices" (Spellcraft, *DRAGON* #326) was the perfect spell for my ranger who has Innate Magic from "Racial Feats" (Heroic Feats, *DRAGON* #324). Heck, I'm even using the lupin race from "Lupins" (Winning Races, *DRAGON* #325). As soon as I got to nature items in "Nature Unleashed," (Magic Shop, *DRAGON* #326) *arboreal armor* caught my eye.

How is it that you do this? I mean, after all, you keep seeming to Spirited Charge by and shoot an *arrow of slaying* into the gut of the problems that come from making a second character.

Thank you, and keep up the good work.

Frank Rein
Princeton, New Jersey

I'd like to say it's because we're psychic, but as you well know, psionics don't really exist. In fact, we're able to anticipate your needs so well because we regularly cast commune.

CARDBOARD CARRIAGE

First off, I love the new layout, especially the Class Acts articles for each individual class. That's going to give a lot of ideas to newer players who are learning how to roleplay, so kudos!

Now, onto the reason for this email. As a DM, I try to make the maps that my PCs use as close to realistic as possible (at least for scale, since I can't draw a straight line, much less make detailed battlemaps). That said, I have an idea for an insert—two, actually. Previously, *DRAGON* has come out with cardstock minis that we could cut out and use on a regular grid map. How about the same thing with a "caravan" theme. Horses, carriages, and wagons would be great. Personally, I have a problem figuring out the exact scale for a horse-drawn wagon, and it never quite turns out the way I think it should. Secondly, how about a poster-sized map of a ship? Maybe make it two-sided, with the upper deck above and the lower deck or the hold on the flip-side? Being as I've never been on a galleon, warship, or much more than a rowboat, I have no real idea how the inside of a large medieval ship should look.

Jack Flynn
Address Withheld

Those are good ideas, Jack. We'll keep them in mind.

GIVE THE NEW GUY A CHANCE, EH?

I feel that in recent issues the new format has adversely affected the quality of the magazine. I know that some people subscribe to *DRAGON* as a sort of grab bag sourcebook full of random statistics and modifications to the game. I, however, believe that the magazine is much more than that. I look to *DRAGON* when I wish to see a cohesive unit of information, many articles tied together, with richly detailed histories and articles that entertain me as well as provide material for a campaign. I feel that *DRAGON* has fallen into a newspaperlike format that simply provides the hard numbers, and not much else. Also, in earlier issues, there was a promise of the return of Dragonmirth. Where is it?

Andrew Heston
Address Withheld

BLAST FROM THE PAST
S3: EXPEDITION TO THE BARRIER PEAKS

"The expedition has just topped the rise and gained their [sic] first view of the metal doored 'cave.'"

With those words your intrepid band, along with other adventurers brought together by the Grand Duke of Geoff and his allies, set forth to investigate a gated cave from which previously unknown horrors appeared. Upon passing through the metal door the party encountered a strange and alien place made entirely of metal and a strange material described at times as hornlike or shell-like (it's plastic).

As the PCs worked their way down through the metal dungeon (in truth a crashed spaceship buried under rubble for decades), they encountered all manner of alien creatures and a variety of terrifying mechanical monstrosities (i.e. robots). Of course, the coolest part (from the perspective of the PCs) was the variety of futuristic gear they could acquire: blasters, lasers, needler guns, grenades, and—coolest of all—powered armor. To round out the coolness, the module provided a 32-page book of 63 numbered pictures corresponding to locations and creatures in the adventure, including four from Erol Otus in full color!

Written in 1976 as a scenario for Origins II, *S3: Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* didn't see publication until 1980. Gary Gygax (with some help from Rob Kuntz) wrote this module to introduce D&D players to science fantasy. Although the combination of fantasy and science fiction seems commonplace now, *S3: Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* offered the first genre-twisting roleplaying experience.

Oh, and beware the bunnyoids!

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I think you'll like what we have in store over the next few issues, Andrew. Drop us a letter in a couple of months and let us know how you think we're doing. We're constantly working to improve DRAGON, *and reader feedback is critical to that process. I also suggest stopping by our messageboards at* ***paizo.com****, where you can interact with the staff and a growing community of dedicated* DRAGON *and* DUNGEON *readers.*

Dragonmirth will return as soon as we can find a way to bring it back affordably.

CENTRAL CASTING

A fellow gaming friend of mine once brought out a seemingly ancient accessory tome titled *Heroes of Legend: Central Casting*. The book was massively comprehensive in its character creation possibilities. If you weren't the type to flesh out your own character, with this book and the roll of a few dice, it was practically done for you. I have tried to find it at stores and have discovered it is out of print. I know the author is Paul Jaquays, who wrote similar books for modern and future settings. What I want to know is if you can tell me where I might be able to find a copy of said volume for sale. If you could point me in the right direction, that would be absolutely wonderful. (Of course, if you could send me an autographed copy, I'd be even more pleased....)

Thanks and keep up the good work.

Bart Cowan
Louisville, KY

P.S. Not to be splitting hairs, but I already tried looking through the used and out-of-print book companies that advertise in your oh-so-cool publication and their searches wouldn't even bring up the title, much less a copy for sale.

One reason you might be having a difficult time is that the book was actually called Central Casting: Heroes of Legend, *and not the other way around. After some poking around of my own, I think it's fair to say that your best (possibly only) bet is to keep watching eBay. As we go to press that site has one for sale—for about $75 with three days left on the auction. It's a really good book, but it isn't that good. Watch the site carefully and decide before you start bidding how much is too much.*

PUTS THE WTF IN UFO

Dragon Talk

A while back a guy named Dan Paladin made a crazy little Flash game about a crazy little alien out to recover his interstellar ride, and somehow this web-only creation—called *Alien Hominid*—made its way into a full-on console title for PS2 and GameCube. Score one for the (yellow, extraterrestrial, homicidal) little guy.

Fundamentally the game is a side-scrolling shooter that follows the old-school Contra formula: hordes of enemies + extreme difficulty = addictive game. What makes *Alien Hominid* so great is that the frantic cel-shaded mayhem is inflicted by a bizarre cartoon critter that blasts away like Yosemite Sam, hides like a Zerg, and bites heads like an Alien. The game explodes with style and comes packed with minigames besides. Add the frantic co-op mode and it makes for a perfect party game when *Halo 2's* combat ballet is just too much.

We bring it up just because it's a terribly addictive game which, like last year's *Katamari Damacy* and *Ultra Bust A Move*, is just too entertaining not to warrant mention. Check out all the extraterrestrial carnage and some really cool AH gear at **alienhominid.com**. *–Mike Fehlauer*

ISSUE 327

Way to go on a totally cool issue! I loved the fiction and the huge article on tombs was great. I would like to ask a question regarding one of my favorite features: What happened to the Caption Contest? I loved that! Other than that, I have very few complaints about the "new" issues. Here's one of them, though: Why are the covers not appearing in the magazine itself? They used to be used as art for the articles, or else they could be found on their own. Appearing in the magazine like that allowed me to pull them out and stick them on my wall. (They make great posters. Some of them really freaked out my non-gaming friends.) To balance the complaints, I have a huge compliment to whomever came up with "First Watch." Now I know where to get everything my gaming self needs.

To the girl gamers who wrote a letter in issue #327, you go! There seems to be no girl gamers where I live other than myself. I feel a little lonely sometimes. But I look on the bright side—

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Question: In *Clash of the Titans*, who is instrumental in the destruction of the Kraken?

FRACTAL TERRAINS PRO

RANDOM PLANET GENERATION

Stand-alone software from ProFantasy

Worlds can take so long to map. Creating a detailed fantasy world from scratch, can take hours—days even. Not any more.

FT Pro lets you create entire detailed worlds in minutes, so you can use your creativity on populating your campaign, rather than drawing contour lines. It's incredibly easy to use. FT Pro delivers you an entire world—complete with rivers, climate, and temperature zones. Not the world you imagined? No problem, just click the icon again, and again, and again. Then export that world as an image, animation, icosahedral, VRML, or straight into Campaign Cartographer 2 Pro.

But with FT Pro you can be even more godlike. Starting from a random world, real-Earth data, or a flat plain if you prefer, you can "paint" altitude or climate adjustments to suit your whim. You can raise mountains from nothing and consign entire continents to the deep.

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The new Pro version lets you:

- Add Craters, or institute a planetary bombardment.
- Automatically generate river networks.
- Create flat (planar) worlds.
- View in new map projections.
- Use new editing tools include smooth, roughen, deterrace, fill basin, raise, lower, mound, build mountains and noise.
- Automate tasks with the script language.

Upgrades from previous version

If you have an earlier version — Fractal Terrains — you can get Fractal Terrains Pro at a reduced price.

Find out more at ftpro.notlong.com.

System Requirements & Contents: Fractal Terrains works standalone or as an add-on to CC2 Pro. Requires Windows® 95 or better, 16MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space and a CD-Rom drive. Includes The Essentials booklet, and full manual on CD as well as 350MB of Earth and Mars data.

Terrain texture from NASA Visible Earth project website http://visibleearth.nasa.gov NASA height data can be imported into Fractal Terrains Pro

Fractal Terrains Pro is available from profantasy.com, good hobby retailers and by download from rpgnow.com.

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THERE GOES TOKYO AGAIN!

Dragon Talk

With a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and the release of his twenty-eighth big screen epic, *Godzilla: Final Wars*, the King of the Monsters is set for a long vacation. This movie marks the fiftieth anniversary of the city-stomping radioactive lizard and the start of what Toho Studios claims will be a decade-long hiatus from the silver screen for the monster icon.

Fortunately for devotees of all things kaiju, a plethora of Godzilla merchandise is on its way. For the Playstation 2 and XBox there's *Godzilla: Save the Earth*, a monster combat game from Atari featuring all the Toho heavy hitters, but also such lesser lights as Jet Jaguar and Anguirus. The game's official website (**atari.com/godzilla**) doubles as a gateway to the official *Final Wars* movie site and a few other companies with new Godzilla wares. Foremost among them is Columbia Tristar, whose home video arm is releasing DVDs of *Godzilla vs. Hedora* and several other kaiju flicks previously unavailable in letterboxed, subtitled editions. Other Godzilla goodies stomping onto store shelves include chess pieces and statues from X-Plus, bobbleheads and plush monsters from Toy Vault, and several new vinyl figures from Bandai Japan, available at better import toy stores everywhere.

For the very latest on all things Godzilla, check out Daikaiju Enterprises' long-running and high-quality fanzine, G-Fan (**g-fan.com**), or drop by the terrific Monster Zero website (**monsterzero.us**) and its related net communities. *–James Lowder*

one gamer girl, lots of gamer guys... you do the math.

Megan O'Heffernan
San Francisco, CA

Starting next issue, we're planning to reprint the cover image on the last page of the magazine. I'm responsible for the "First Watch" name (which was born in DRAGON Annual *#6, which I edited), but our own F. Wesley Schneider is responsible for the content, bringing you the best in gaming news and new products each and every month. Three cheers for Wes.*

CHAIN 'EM UP

I have a dilemma. I have been a D&D fan for many years and I consider myself a pretty decent DM. I have DM'ed some fairly popular homemade campaigns and have had to revise several because they were requested so many times. I have had a good long run and enjoyed nearly every minute. But alas I now find myself without a group.

Now I know that for most in my situation you would say just find another group. Well, that is far easier said than done. The closest shop is an hour away, and with a family, I just don't have time to go searching all over creation for players. We live in a small rural community in the Bible Belt where D&D is not the most popular pastime. Most folk now just want to play video games or go work on their meth labs. Despite the good press in the mainstream media D&D still carries a bit of a stigma here. So now my only access to a hobby that I enjoy is through *DRAGON* magazine. This isn't the first time that I have had to take a "break" from gaming, so I will sit back, flip through my *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, and wait for the latest issue of *DRAGON*. Eventually a new group will arise and I'll be back in the game. Hopefully before fourth edition is out.

Mike "Captain D" Dockery
Address Withheld

P.S. There is a lesson to learn from all this,

1. If you find a group that works well together, do what you can to help them stay together. Be creative, but I suggest chaining them up in the basement.

2. If you have spouses in your group, do not let them get divorced! So as the DM you must put on the Cupid hat and help promote marital bliss or just chain them up in the basement.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK ANSWER

Answer: It's Bubo of course! He delivers Medusa's head to Perseus just in the nick of time!

3. If one of the players moves you have several options: A) buy expensive video phones so that they can still be present for games; B) write them off, forget they ever existed, and have their characters die horrible deaths; or C) chain them up in the basement.

4. If you have players who don't get along very well and threaten to drive the group apart, just chain them up in separate parts of the basement. Or you could chain them closer together and let them have at it... sort of like a gladiator campaign.

Well I hope my insight into this problem can be of some help to others who feel they might soon be in the same position.

Well, I was going to suggest checking out local RPGA gamedays and conventions to round up new players, but I'm not sure I want to subject any Network members to your basement chains....

BLASTED FROM THE PAST

I am the kind of guy who thinks rangers and rogues are the coolest, old school heavy metal is the best gaming music, DRAGONLANCE is for girls, and the best edition of D&D is the current one. So, take my opinions within that context.

I always hated the articles that gave me a headache reading because someone decided to put red lettering on a purple background. I have never been a fan of lots of fiction in the pages of *DRAGON*. I don't think that video games belong in the pages of our venerable *DRAGON*. I think that the new look of the titles on *DRAGON* and *DUNGEON* are boring, but definitely more legible. I guess that's good if you are trying to spot it on a newsstand, but since I subscribe, I would like something that is more interesting.

I bet you are tired of gripe letters....

I am in love with the Class Acts column. It would be cool if at the end of each Class Acts, a prestige class or particular concept was looked at from various angles. For example, a good one would be the various routes that can be taken to gain the requirements to become an assassin, and the different styles that can be employed while playing that sort of a concept. I like how everything is compartmentalized. I like the same sort of articles being placed with one another. The comics being together is awesome. I also like the articles that are basically one person talking about their experiences with the game, and various other personal thoughts. Coup de Grace, From the Editor, Up on a Soapbox, and that sort of thing are good examples. I really like the fact that *DRAGON* is not catering to the campaign settings too much. I like the new EBERRON setting a lot, but I don't think that everyone shares my opinion, so it's best to limit the amount of info in the magazine. I used to always just skip the GREYHAWK and SPELLJAMMER stuff without a second thought. It's cool to feature occasional old stuff though. I like DARK SUN a lot, and I thought it was great that it was gone over in a 3.5 context. There are tons of things I like, but these are the ones that come to mind.

Thanks for putting out a good magazine that caters to all players and DMs alike. Keep up the good work, and I will keep reading.

David Hollingsworth
Vancouver, WA

YOUNG TERROR

I'm 11 years old right now and I got a subscription for Christmas last year. I just love it!

I was wondering if you could put more horror supplements for D&D in *DRAGON*. When I picked up issue #324 and saw that it had a part on H. P. Lovecraft I almost died with excitement!

I am a big fan of horror and H. P. Lovecraft, so I am asking if you could simply put some more articles on horror in *DRAGON* every once and a while

Thanks!

Sam Shaftoe
Guelph, Canada

Check out the very Lovecraftian Far Realm next month, and be sure to look out for the October issue, which will boast page after page of horrifying content.
—ERIK MONA

Riddle of the Unicorn

79 all new riddles
Plus a special hidden riddle contest
Win cash and prizes!

Need a break from Hack & Slash?

Riddle Rooms

Riddle Rooms are riddles and puzzles presented as rooms that can be added to any dungeon or adventure. Each room has one or more illustrations. Can be used with any system.

CLOUD KINGDOM

Cloud Kingdom Games

This issue's Riddle:

Before it's born, its skeleton
Does grow upon the land.
Then near the sea it grows and grows
Until its form is grand.
And though it swims upon the waves
It dies upon the sand.

Get a new riddle each week in your email. Sign up at:
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Find the riddle answer in our other ad in this issue

For more riddles and games visit us at
www.cloudkingdom.com/Dragon

reported by Shelly Baur, Dale Donovan, Mike Fehlauer, Rob Lightner, and Erik Mona

PREVIEWS, NOTES, AND NEWS FOR GAMERS

NEW RELEASES

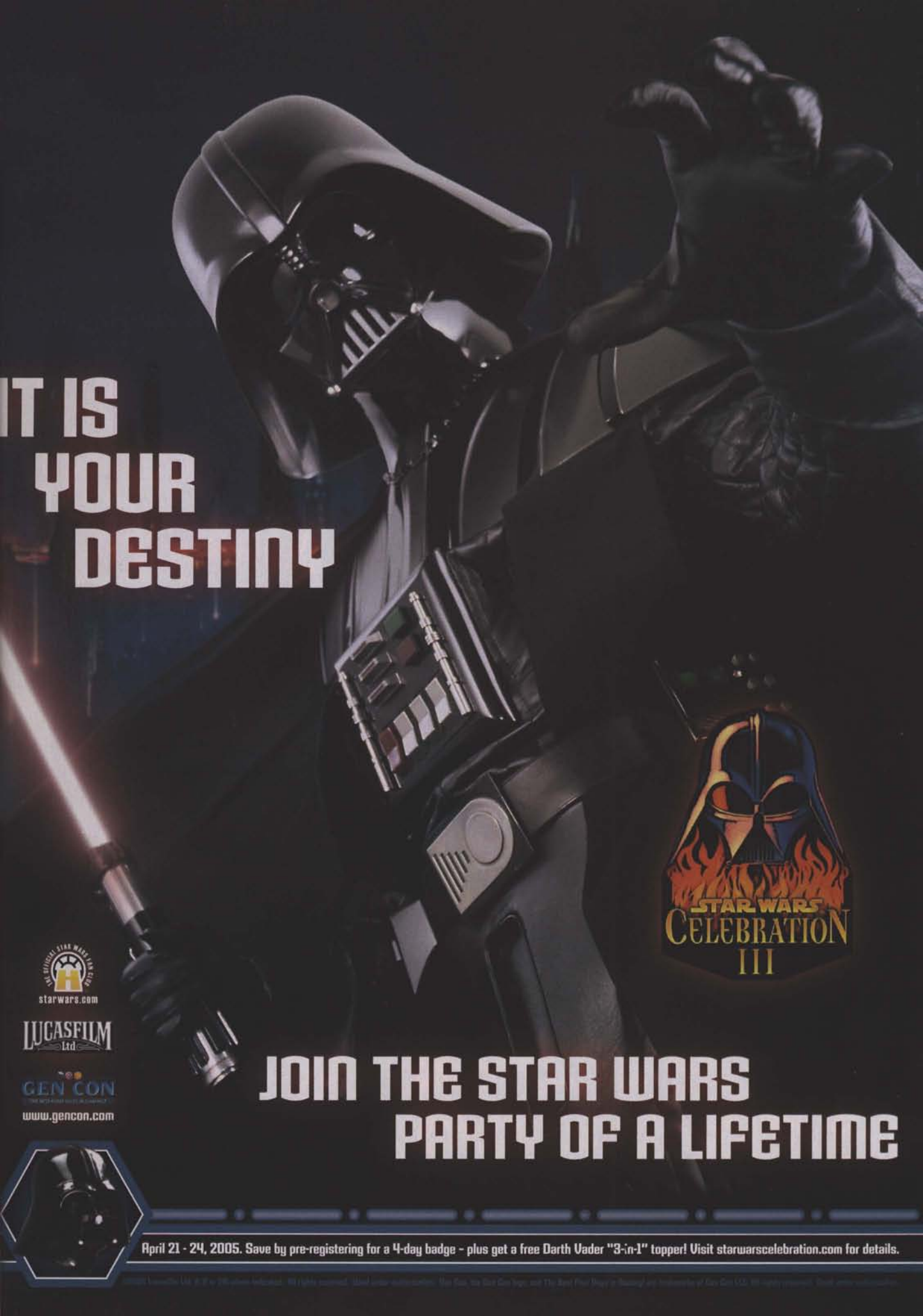
Sandstorm is the guide to all things dry and deadly, providing your characters with everything they need to survive the dangers of the desert. To conserve water, pack special new gear like hydration suits onto three types of camel mounts or control the precious resource as a member of the Scions of Tem-Et-Nu prestige class. Find ways to conquer heat-adapted creatures such as the exploding porcupine cactus or the marru abomination, a creature so powerful it annihilated an entire race. Each character class even has an updated variant, like the desert paladin who serves as a water guardian or arcane and divine casters who can sap the very moisture from your blood. In addition, expect tons of desert-modified prestige classes, spells, and details on how to run your own desert campaign. –*S.B.*

Deathknell brings the undead to life, at least in miniature form. Some of the most appealing monsters from this set's 60 figures include Griffins, Beholders, Couatls, Ettin Skirmishers, three new dragons, and two large uncommons—the Dire Bear and Skull Crusher Ogre. The Beast Master and Grim Necromancer make new types of warbands possible, as they control dire animals and undead. New rules for warband mechanics are also tweaked to optimize play. Since this set was designed simultaneously with *Monster Manual III*, creatures like the Boneclaw were sculpted and painted in parallel, making the minis and the manuals mesh better than in any previous set. Also, check out the new *Deathknell* Kenku in "The Ecology of the Kenku" on page 71 of this issue. –*S.B.*

GRIMTOOTH'S TRAPS RESURRECTED

This spring, a sterling collection of the most insidious, innovative, and downright nastiest traps ever devised to destroy your dearly loved player characters returns from the deathless realm known as "Out of Print." Yes, that's right, Grimtooth is back.

Grimtooth the troll, master trap-builder and foe of dungeon delvers everywhere, tortured players and killed PCs in hilariously inventive ways back in the days of furry-footed halflings and THAC0. Now, the best of the seven-volume series of *Grimtooth's Traps* are collected here, with Grimtooth's blessing, and fully converted and updated to d20 rules. Clark Petersen of Necromancer Games (**necromancergames.com**), the company to credit (or blame) for Grimtooth's return, had this to say about every DM's favorite troll engineer. "We kept the tongue-in-cheek nature of the originals intact and even added a new storyline with Grimtooth, Grimtina, and Bill and me (from Necromancer Games), where Grimmy kills Bill and me at the end." Clark also hints at a surprise for the readers of the book as well, but prefers that it, like Grimtooth's traps themselves, remains a secret–until it's too late. –*D.D.*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BATTLE FOR EBERRON

This month EBERRON makes its electronic debut with *Dragonshard*, a real-time strategy PC game from Atari and developed by Liquid Entertainment.

Capturing the unique flavor of a D&D session, *Dragonshard* is much more than just another fantasy RTS game. The game consists of two distinct types of game play. The first mode offers what you might expect from a fantasy RTS: you gather various resources, build units, fight against large enemy armies, and so on. In the second type of play all that we love about D&D shines forth, as unit leaders take on all the aspects of PCs and enter dungeonlike areas of the map. Further, these leaders "absorb" their units, making the leaders even tougher (i.e., the bigger the unit, the better the bonuses the leader receives when dungeon delving).

Liquid has also recently announced lizard folk as the third of *Dragonshard's* three playable factions (the first two being the Church of the Silver Flame and the sinister Umbragen dark elves). Take control of this race's reptilian warriors, including war drakes, pteradons, hydras, and even a gigantic dragon named Red Fang, along with a host of other monstrosities and deadly powers. For more on *Dragonshard* check out **atari.com**. *–D.D.*

ROLL YOUR OWN

Back with more innovations for your gaming table, Green Dragon Studio sells a complete line of rubber stamps of common adventure fixtures. Starter packs come with three or four related stamps (such as an outdoor pack with trees and bushes or a furniture pack with common dungeon dressings), an ink pad, and a little dropper bottle of battle-mat-safe wet erase ink. Pick up a few packs and you can say goodbye to the days when players must guess whether a scrawled square represents a chest full of treasure or a spike-filled pit.

In addition to this familiar fare, Green Dragon Studio produces a new product that utilizes the most advanced in roller technology. Our ink-stained fingers tremble with glee at the thought of a custom roller that can produce, say, a wave pattern for water adventures, inlaid tiles for temple sackings, or piles of skulls for tomb raids. For Green Dragon Studio's complete line and ordering information, check out their site at **greendragonstudio.com**. *–M.F.*

DUNGEON THIS MONTH

DUNGEON #120

The World of D&D Poster Map (3 of 4)

The third of four giant poster maps by all-star cartographer Robert Lazaretti reveals the sinister Scarlet Brotherhood, the vast reach of the corrupt Great Kingdom, and the location of D&D's most infamous location, the Tomb of Horrors!

The Obsidian Eye

by Nicolas Logue and Brendan Victorson

The shifting desert sands have revealed an ancient obelisk whose presence is having an unsettling effect on the surrounding desert. Ancient dead arise from the dunes, dangerous jackalweres launch attacks on caravans and villages, and the mysterious Order of the Obsidian Eye has flocked to the unearthed ruin for reasons no doubt dire. A D&D adventure for 3rd-level characters.

The Forsaken Arch

by Timothy J. Haener

The pearl divers of Shoalbury are in trouble. A band of birdlike kenku and ogres have been ambushing and plundering outgoing shipments of pearls, and stealing eyes from the bodies of their victims. A single guard survived the most recent ambush and his testimony might just be enough to lead a brave band of adventurers to the bandit lair and to the sinister cult they serve. A D&D adventure for 7th-level characters.

Lost Temple of Demogorgon

by Sean K Reynolds

His name has inspired fear in legions of heroes, and his cult has lurked in the dismal reaches of the world for countless ages. He is Demogorgon, and his temples are nightmare realms haunted by primeval menaces and hateful legacies from a time when the world was savage. And now, a vengeful death knight has discovered one of these lost temples—will the PCs aid him in his dark quest for revenge, or will they fall before the awakened host of the Prince of Demons? A D&D adventure for 14th-level characters.

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D&D NOT-SO-MINIATURES

DMs with a sadistic streak (and no, that's not necessarily redundant) should drop an offering from *McFarlane's Dragons: Quest for the Lost King* series on the table and enjoy the panicky results. The 6-inch figures might be out of bounds for regular play, but these models truly capture the mythic aura of fear and awe dragons inspire. With staggering details—capturing every vein and perfectly etched scale—each dragon has a unique and intriguing character that ties in with its specific clan and story. One, the Eternal Clan Dragon, even features a human rider, but should still be plenty alarming to Joe PC. Behold these monsters of legends in all their terrifying splendor at **spawn.com**. *–R.L.*

HAIL TO THE KING

If the devil's really in the details, watch out for anything by Todd McFarlane. The new King Conan of Aquilonia 6-inch figure is a great example of McFarlane's devotion to detail. The lush red curtain behind the stark, lion's head-themed throne frames Conan's slouching, aging figure perfectly. The king's face, seemingly modeled after Mandy Patinkin's, carries the grumpy weight of an adventurer forced into a life of boring luxury. His armor looks used, but not used enough for its wearer's liking. It's a great reminder for gamers why their millionaire PCs can never seem to bring themselves to retire.

King Conan of Aquilonia is merely one in McFarlane's *Conan Series Two: Hour of the Dragon* line, featuring five other equally detailed figures, such as the man-eating haunter of the pits, Xaltotun the Undead, and the beautiful Zenobia. See the entire line at **spawn.com**. *–R.L.*

THUNDER ROLLS THROUGH TIME

In *A Sound of Thunder*, time-traveling big game hunters set off a chain reaction that threatens to erase humanity from existence. To save our reality, a team of experts must go back in time and prevent the initial mishap. Based on a short story by master author Ray Bradbury and chock full of weird, "evolution-gone-wrong" creatures, this flick promises out-of-control science and monsters aplenty. Get out and see it before your DM does, so you'll know what he's up to when he sics some of this movie's weird critters on your hapless PCs. Knowledge is power! Staring Edward Burns and Ben Kingsley, *A Sound of Thunder* releases this month. *–D.D.*

MINI OF THE MONTH

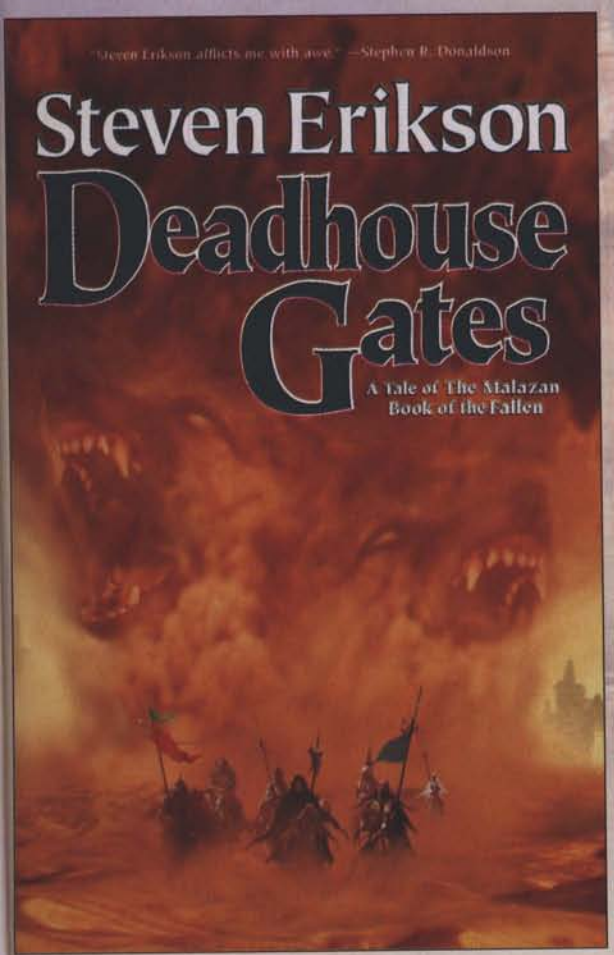
A few years ago, a little French company called Rackham burst onto the gaming scene with an incredible range of metal fantasy miniatures to support *Confrontation*, a tabletop skirmishing game similar to *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*. For too long, the miniatures remained difficult to obtain outside Europe, the province of obsessed miniature collectors who hoped their high school French was strong enough to put together an online order.

Happily, *Confrontation* is now available in English, Rackham (**rackham.fr**) is no longer a "little company," and the full line of their miniatures is available online and at better hobby shops. Rackham's star has risen recently due to the peerless quality of its imaginative sculpts and the inventiveness of its conceptual design. The game boasts hundreds of miniatures appropriate for use with any fantasy RPG (let alone the intriguing *Confrontation* game itself).

Our most recent favorite is the Black Paladins set, a three-figure offering that presents a trio of fearsome swordsmen ready to terrorize your game. The three similar figures come in slightly different poses, each with his own hauntingly embellished tower shield. I plan to use them as agents of GREYHAWK'S notorious Horned Society, but they make fitting champions of any diabolical force in your campaign world. *–E.M.*

"Steven Erikson is a master of lost and forgotten epochs, a weaver of ancient epics..."*

STEVEN ERIKSON
Deadhouse Gates

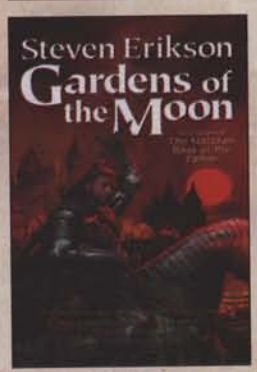

"Steven Erikson afflicts me with awe." —Stephen R. Donaldson
Steven Erikson
Deadhouse Gates
A Tale of The Malazan Book of the Fallen

Deadhouse Gates

Hardcover: 0-765-31002-3 • $25.95/$35.95 Can.
Trade paperback: 0-765-31429-0 • $14.95/$21.95 Can.
Available February 2005

Deadhouse Gates is the second book in The Malazan Book of the Fallen, the thrilling epic of war, intrigue and betrayal begun in *Gardens of the Moon*.

In the vast dominion of Seven Cities, in the Holy Desert Raraku, the seer Sha'ik and her followers prepare for the long-prophesied uprising known as the Whirlwind—a maelstrom of fanaticism and savagery that will embroil the Malazan Empire in one of the bloodiest conflicts it has ever known...



Gardens of the Moon

0-765-34878-0 • $7.99/$10.99 Can.
Available now in paperback!

Conceived and written on a panoramic scale, *Gardens of the Moon* introduces the awe-inspiring Malazan Book of the Fallen—a brilliant fantasy epic of a world ravaged by dark, uncontrollable magic.

"Give me...the evocation of a rich, complex and yet ultimately unknowable other world, with a compelling suggestion of intricate history and mythology and lore. Give me mystery amid the grand narrative....[G]ive me a world in which every sea hides a crumbled Atlantis, every ruin has a tale to tell, every mattock blade is a silent legacy of struggles unknown. Give me, in other words, the fantasy work of Steven Erikson.... Erikson is a master of lost and forgotten epochs, a weaver of ancient epics on a scale that would approach absurdity if it wasn't so much fun."

—*Salon*

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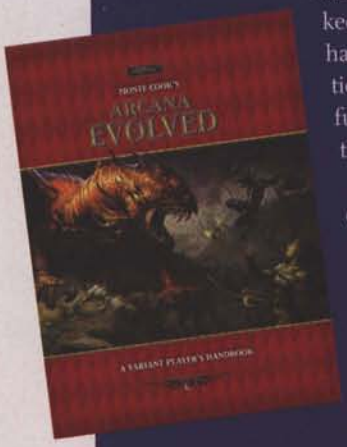
ARCANA EVOLVED

Available this month, *Arcana Evolved*, the massive revision/expansion of Monte Cook's original *Arcana Unearthed*, promises to thrill gamers following the progress of his alternative D&D setting. Entirely new classes, races, and magic would be plenty to keep any imaginative DM or player happy, but Cook's meticulous attention to how all the elements fit and function together is what makes the work such a powerful draw.



It's hard to move away from established archetypes like wizards, rangers, dwarves, and elves—and harder to create new ones, yet Cook draws players in by taking the coolest features of the old archetypes and re-imagining them in radical new combinations. Monte Cook rolled a natural 20 with *Arcana Unearthed*, and *Arcana Evolved* easily confirms the crit. *–R.L.*

FULL METAL FANTASY

At long last, the Iron Kingdoms are yours to explore with Privateer Press' *Full Metal Fantasy, Volume Two: Iron Kingdoms World Guide*. This lavishly illustrated book is packed with 400+ pages of history, story, and flavor. Every city, every kingdom is exhaustively detailed with encyclopedic detail: industry, military, people, languages, politics, points of interest, and more. Released totally under the Open Gaming License, this eagerly awaited behemoth presents no new games rules, making the setting just as valuable to players of other RPGs as it is to d20 players. The guide also hints at new releases and plots developing in Privateer's wildly popular *Warmachine* miniatures game. For more about the Iron Kingdoms, *Warmachine*, and *Full Metal Fantasy, Volume Two: Iron Kingdoms World Guide*, check out **privateerpress.com**. *–M.F.*

RPGA UPDATE

by Ian Richards
RPGA Program Manager

Undoubtedly, roleplaying games are serious fun. I remember games where, amidst jokes and wisecracks, friends and I intensely concentrated for hours to defeat one heinous plot or another. All great fun, of which we decided the RPGA needs more! Something a little less intense and a lot lighter hearted. Therefore we are happy to announce that we will be working with Rich Burlew on having a brand new cartoon strip for the RPGA Newsletter I spoke about in the last issue.

For those of you unfamiliar with Rich's work, he has made our weeks brighter with the adventures of the Order of the Stick, which offers a lighthearted look at the world of fantasy RPGs and in particular D&D. He has kindly agreed to do a series of cartoons for our GM T-shirts for the three big shows in 2005. Each shirt features a brand new Order of the Stick single frame cartoon and will be given to all the GMs who run RPGA games at ORIGINS, GEN CON INDY, or GEN CON SO CAL as a special thank you. So for all you GMs who are Order of the Stick enthusiasts, you can get more information about volunteering for us at the RPGA website as it nears the dates of those shows. Show dates are available at **gencon.com** and **originsgames.com**. For those of you who have yet to be initiated into the "Order" and are now curious to see Rich's work, visit the home of the Order of the Stick at **giantitp.com**.

Of late there has also been a stirring in the "force" with individuals inquiring if and when we will be doing any STAR WARS MINIATURES leagues and sanctioning. Well, as of March 1, 2005, galactic domination begins with the brand new STAR WARS MINIATURES League kit. This will be very similar to the existing D&D Campaigns kits with content specifically for STAR WARS MINIATURES players, including special clear plastic templates, terrain tiles, and special alternative-paint miniatures starting with May's kit. These miniatures will have different paint jobs from those contained within the retail sets, making them unique to this program. Plus, they are only available through participating stores and only in the month they are scheduled for. All statistics will remain the same, which means no super-powered Sith Lord Ewoks! If you'd like to be part of this struggle for domination in a universe not so far, far away, contact your local store and make sure it is participating, and if it isn't and it wishes to, then have the store contact its Direct Sales representative at Wizards of the Coast.

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by Nicholas Herold • illustrated by Michael William Kaluta

Then from the moorland, by misty crags, with God's wrath laden, Grendel came.

THE BEASTS OF BEOWULF

More gore from lore of yore

Beowulf is one of the oldest surviving examples of English literature. It tells the story of Beowulf, a Geatish warrior who lived in the fifth century, CE. The son of Ecgtheow and the nephew and retainer of Hygelac, king of the Geats, Beowulf was renowned in his youth for his recklessness, strength, and stamina. One oft-told story tells how Beowulf, in a swimming contest with his boyhood friend Breca, swam for five days in full armor and slayed nine vicious whales on his way back to shore.

At this time, the neighboring kingdom of Denmark was under siege. Their king, Hrothgar, built a great hall for his people, named Heorot. In this hall Hrothgar held feasts and celebrations, while bards sang the praises of the god who granted him this wealth. In the mere nearby, however, lurked Grendel, a cannibal ogre cursed by the gods. Enraged, Grendel sacked Heorot, devouring thirty of Hrothgar's thanes. Every night when Hrothgar held his festivities, Grendel attacked, tearing the king's sleeping retainers limb from limb.

Grendel held Heorot under his reign of terror for twelve years before Beowulf sailed to Denmark, boasting of his strength and promising Hrothgar he'd slay the monster. Being an honorable sort, Beowulf agreed to fight Grendel on his own terms, without weaponry. To Hrothgar's surprise, Beowulf succeeded, ripping Grendel's arm from its socket and nailing it to the wall of Heorot as a trophy. Hrothgar rewarded Beowulf with the blessing of his kingdom and numerous gifts, including rings and other treasure.

Unfortunately for Beowulf, Grendel was not alone in the swamps: He lived in an underwater cave with his mother, a monster in her own right. When she found Grendel dead in the mere from his obvious battle-wounds, she flew into a fury and traced her son's blood back to Heorot. Waiting until the warriors had fallen asleep, she stalked into the hall and killed Aeschare, Hrothgar's counselor, taking his body into the swamp to mimic how her son was taken from her. Beowulf followed Grendel's mother into the swamps and dove into the deepest pool after her. Although Grendel's mother struggled with Beowulf, her claws could not find purchase in his chainmail. Dragging Beowulf into her hall to finish him with her knife, the mighty warrior beheaded her using a sword from her own hoard.

Returning to Geatland with wealth and renown, Beowulf soon inherited the kingdom from his uncle, who died in battle with the Scylfings. Beowulf ruled for fifty years, protecting his people from rival nations, and was widely considered a good king. However, in his kingdom lived a firedrake who slept for centuries on a bed of gold and jewels left behind by some long-forgotten king. The dragon awoke when a slave, fleeing his master, stole a gem-encrusted goblet from the terrible beast's hoard. The firedrake searched his cave for an entire day, looking for the goblet, before taking out his ire on the Geats by burning their villages to the ground. Beowulf set out with his men to slay the firedrake, but all of them fled in terror save his steward Wiglaf. Beowulf and Wiglaf slew the dragon during a fierce and bloody battle, but not before the firedrake

injected Beowulf with its deadly poison. Beowulf died that day, leaving the Geats to an uncertain future.

For years, scholars ignored the various beasts of Beowulf as unneeded trappings on a tale of various tribes, their genealogies, and their battles. Thanks to the efforts of a professor of English named J. R. R. Tolkien, it is now generally considered that the creatures slain by Beowulf are indicative of his status as a true hero.

Grendel

Large Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice: 10d8+70 (115 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), swim 40 ft.
Armor Class: 22 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +11 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 20
Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+22
Attack: Claw +17 melee (1d6+8)
Full Attack: 2 claws +17 melee (1d6+8) and bite +15 melee (1d8+4)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Frenzy, rend 2d6+12
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., DR 15/bludgeoning, hold breath, low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +7
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 15, Con 25, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Hide +8*, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Spot +3, Swim +16
Feats: Cleave, Diehard[B], Multiattack, Power Attack, Stealthy
Environment: Cold marsh
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 9
Treasure: Standard (including *dragonskin bag of Grendel*)
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: +7

This horrid creature resembles a man, but no man was ever so tall or so feral. Its hide is thick and its jaws and claws appear adept at tearing human flesh. It carries over its shoulder a massive bag crafted out of reptilian hide.

Grendel is the ogrelike descendent of Cain, the first murderer. Hated by the gods, he lives in a haunted mere with his mother, a powerful hag. Grendel is carnivorous, feeding off wild game, travelers, and Hrothgar's retainers in his war against Heorot.

Grendel stands about 12 feet tall and weighs over 500 pounds. He speaks Common and Giant, but rarely has anything to say.

Combat

Grendel prefers to avoid fair fights and whenever possible attacks from ambush. Whether this means hiding in a mere or simply creeping toward a sleeping human depends on the situation. If he fails to kill his opponent on the first attack, he is liable to fly into a frenzy.

Grendel frequently attacks using his Power Attack feat, taking a –5 penalty on his attack rolls and gaining a +5 bonus on damage rolls.

Frenzy (Ex): If Grendel takes damage in combat, he flies into a berserk rage as a free action on his next turn, clawing and biting madly until he or his opponent is dead. When in a frenzy, Grendel gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, and a –2 penalty to Armor Class. Grendel cannot end this rage voluntarily.

Rend (Ex): Whenever Grendel hits an opponent with both claw attacks, he grabs and tears the opponent's flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+12 points of damage.

Hold Breath (Ex): Grendel can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to six times his Constitution score before he risks drowning.

Skills: Grendel has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. He can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he swims in a straight line.

*Grendel has a +4 racial bonus on all Hide checks. This bonus increases to +8 in marshes.

Dragonskin Bag of Grendel

This large sack is crafted from the hides of black dragons and swamp serpents. The bag acts like a *bag of holding (type IV)*, with the exception that it does not open into a nondimensional space. Instead, any item placed inside the bag is shrunk to 1/16 normal size. This bag does not shrink living creatures or spell effects. If dispelled, all objects within the bag immediately return to normal size, ruining the bag. The bag can hold no more than 1,500 lb of material, although the bag's weight never exceeds 8 lb. This bag can be placed inside a nondimensional space such as a *bag of holding*, but it cannot be further reduced, such as through a *glove of storing*.

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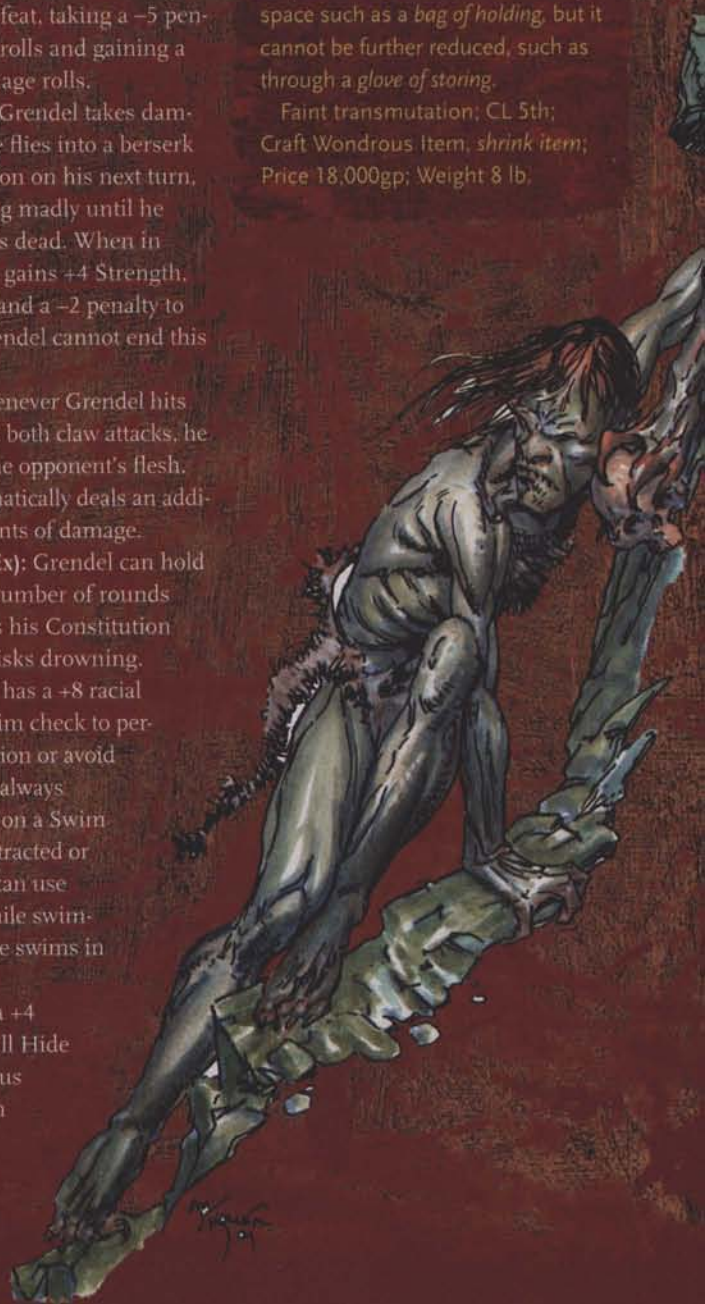

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Grendel's Mother

Large Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice: 15d8+105 (172 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 40 ft.
Armor Class: 24 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +14 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 23
Base Attack/Grapple: +15/+34
Attack: Claw +25 melee (1d6+11) or *large +2 short sword* +27 melee (1d8+13/19-20)
Full Attack: 2 claws +25 melee (1d6+11) and bite +23 melee (1d8+5) or *large +2 short sword* +27/+22/+17 melee (1d8+13/19-20) and bite +23 melee (1d8+5)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Improved grab, rake 1d6+13
Special Qualities: Blood curse, darkvision 60 ft., DR 15/adamantine, hold breath, scent
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +11
Abilities: Str 32, Dex 12, Con 24, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 10
Skills: Hide +8, Listen +15, Move Silently +12, Spot +15, Survival +12, Swim +19
Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Track
Environment: Cold marsh
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 13
Treasure: Double standard (including a *large +2 shortsword* and a *large +1 adamantine monstrous humanoid bane greatsword*)
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: +9

This strange creature is shaped vaguely like a woman, but she is bony and gaunt, taller than any human woman. Her skin is covered in a layer of tough scales and sharp claws tip her webbed fingers. Her gait is awkward and bent, appearing uncomfortable on land.

The true name of Grendel's mother is unknown. Her small role in history is completely defined by her son. A large haglike creature, Grendel's mother lives in a submerged hall in a haunted mere with her son. She is more intelligent and wary than her offspring. Often lurking in swamps, she feeds on lost travelers and wildlife while her son brings her treasures from the outside world.

Grendel's mother stands about 8 feet tall and weighs about 325 pounds. She speaks Common, Abyssal, and Giant, but finds it unusual to talk to her food.

Combat

Grendel's mother dislikes fighting fair and she usually attacks from ambush. She prefers to grapple opponents, drag them into the mere, and tear them to pieces with her claws. If this fails, she relies on weapons that she keeps in her hall.

Grendel's mother usually attacks using her Combat Expertise feat, taking a –5 penalty on her attack rolls to gain a +5 bonus to Armor Class.

Blood Curse (Su): Grendel's mother is protected by a vindictive curse, should she happen to die. Any slashing or piercing weapon that deals the killing blow to Grendel's mother is utterly destroyed, melting into a puddle of bloody metal. Magic weapons receive a DC 22 Fortitude save to avoid this effect.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Grendel's mother must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with a claw attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If she succeeds, she establishes a hold and can rake.

Hold Breath (Ex): Grendel's mother can hold her breath for a number of rounds equal to six times her Constitution score before she risks drowning.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +23, 1d6+11 damage.

Skills: Grendel's mother has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. She can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. She can use the run action while swimming, provided she swims in a straight line.

Grendel and Grendel's Mother in the Campaign

Grendel and Grendel's mother are difficult to use in a D&D game, as both are unique and dead. Fortunately, there are simple solutions to this problem. Perhaps Beowulf failed and either Grendel, his mother, or both the monsters are still on the loose and need to be stopped, or perehaps other Cain-spawned monsters exist, using the same statistics as Grendel or Grendel's mother. DMs interested in using Grendel or Grendel's Mother in their campaigns might consider some of the following plot hooks.

- A bardic college is under nocturnal assault from multiple Grendel-like creatures.
- The king sends out a call for adventurers to stop monstrous bandits waylaying and devouring travelers.
- A beast much like Grendel's mother declares herself "Queen of the Mere" and forces neighboring rulers to pay her tribute or die.

Firedrake

Gargantuan Dragon (Fire)
Hit Dice: 28d12+252 (434 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 200 ft. (clumsy)
Armor Class: 33 (–4 size, +27 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 33
Base Attack/Grapple: +28/+54
Attack: Bite +38 melee (6d6+14 plus poison)
Full Attack: Bite +38 melee (6d6+14 plus poison), 2 claws +36 melee (2d8+7), 2 wings +36 melee (2d6+7), and tail slap +36 melee (2d8+21)
Space/Reach: 20 ft./15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)
Special Attacks: Breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, poison
Special Qualities: Blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., DR 15/magic, immunity to fire, paralysis and sleep, keen sight, SR 29, vulnerability to cold
Saves: Fort +25, Ref +16, Will +23
Abilities: Str 39, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 11, Wis 20, Cha 21
Skills: Intimidate +36, Knowledge (history) +31, Listen +38, Search +31, Sense Motive +36, Spot +38

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Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Wingover
Environment: Cold mountains and underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 20
Treasure: Triple standard
Alignment: Neutral evil
Advancement: 29–56 HD (Gargantuan), 57–84 HD (Colossal)

The sinuous dragon in front of you bares its dripping fangs menacingly. It has a long serpentine neck, topped by a head almost too large for its body. Great black wings stretch behind it, as does a powerful tail tipped by a wicked bone hook. The dragon's color is a deep red, and its eyes glow a coppery orange.

Firedrakes are a species of dragon that lack in magical power but compensate for it in sheer physical strength. They are not as intelligent as most true dragons and fear their more clever kin, living in difficult-to-access caves and on mountain peaks. Like all dragons they crave treasure and are capable of both amassing great hoards and knowing every detail within them.

A firedrake is over 50 feet long, has a wingspan of approximately 100 feet, and weighs 30 tons. Firedrakes speak Draconic.

Combat

Firedrakes prefer to breathe fire as often as possible and not close into melee combat unless necessary. If directly confronted, they assault their foes with a barrage of powerful physical attacks, including their venomous bite.

A firedrake's natural weapons count as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Breath Weapon (Su): 60-foot cone, damage 16d10 fire, Reflex DC 33 half.

Crush (Ex): When flying, a firedrake can land on its opponents, crushing them underneath its body. The firedrake can affect as many Medium or smaller creatures as can fit underneath its body. Creatures within the area must make a DC 33 Reflex save or be pinned and take 4d6+21 points of damage. Creatures that make their save are not pinned. The firedrake must make grapple checks every round if it wishes to maintain the pin, and pinned creatures take damage from the crush every round.

Frightful Presence (Ex): All creatures with 28 or fewer Hit Dice within 240 feet of a firedrake when it charges, attacks, or flies overhead must make DC 29 Will saves or be shaken for 4d6 rounds. Creatures with fewer than 5 HD are panicked instead of shaken if they fail this save. A creature that succeeds this save is immune to that firedrake's frightful presence for 24 hours. The firedrake is immune to the frightful presence of other dragons.

Poison (Ex): The poison of a firedrake causes searing pain as the victim's internal organs burn. Bite, Fort DC 33 negates, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con. In addition, any creature that takes the initial damage is sickened for 2d4 minutes.

Keen Sight (Ex): A firedrake can see four times as well as a human in shadowy conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Beowulf

Beowulf, Male Human Fighter 15: CR 15; Medium humanoid (human); HD 15d10+45; hp 127; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25 (+2 Dex, +7 armor, +5 shield, +1 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +15; Grp +26; Atk +24 melee (1d4+11/19–20, unarmed strike) or +24 melee (1d4+9/19–20, *+2 dagger*) or +23 melee (1d8+7/19–20, masterwork bastard sword); Full Atk +24/+19/+14 melee (1d4+11/19–20, unarmed strike) or +24/+19/+14 melee (1d4+9/19–20, *+2 dagger*) or +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+7/19–20, masterwork bastard sword); AL NG; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 24, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +25, Jump +25, Spot +9, Survival +9, Swim +25.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Diehard, Endurance, Greater Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Greater Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Skill Focus (swim), Track, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike).

Languages: Common, Draconic, Giant.

Possessions: *+2 mithral chainmail, +3 heavy wooden shield of fire resistance 20, ring of protection +1, belt of giant strength +4, +2 dagger,* masterwork bastard sword.

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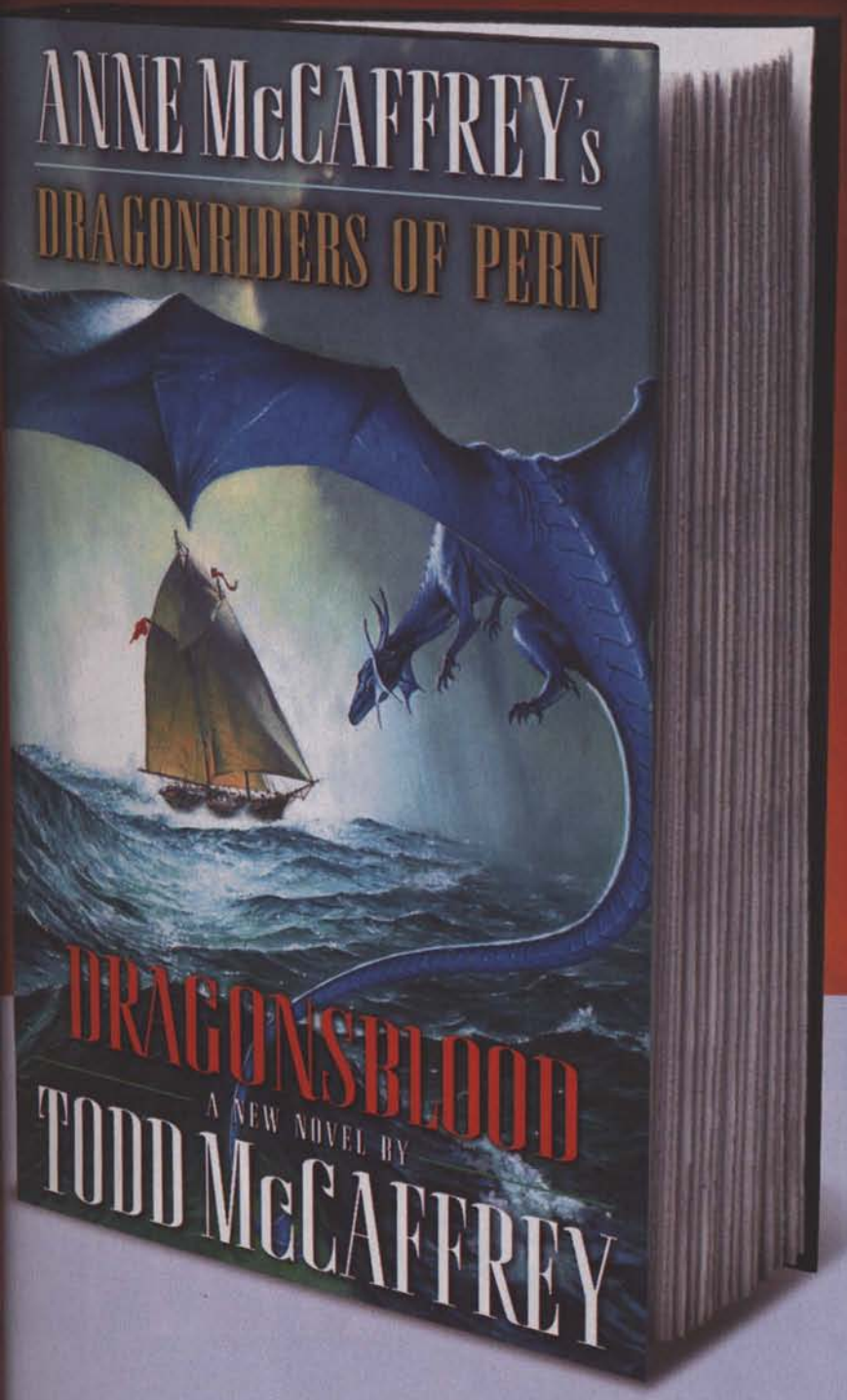

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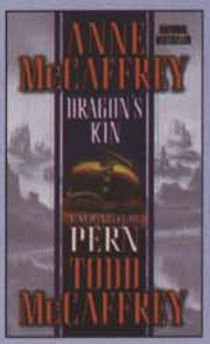

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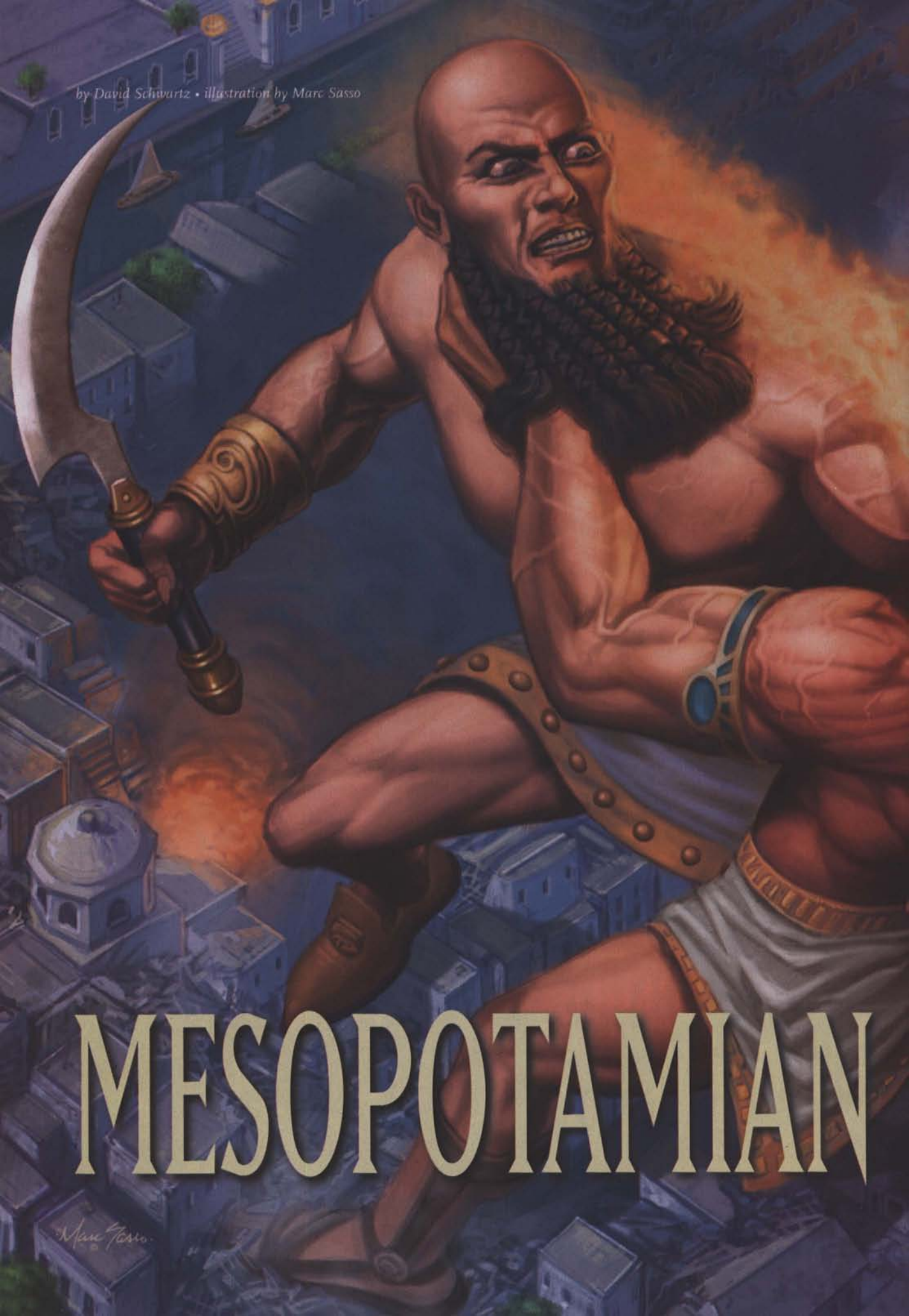
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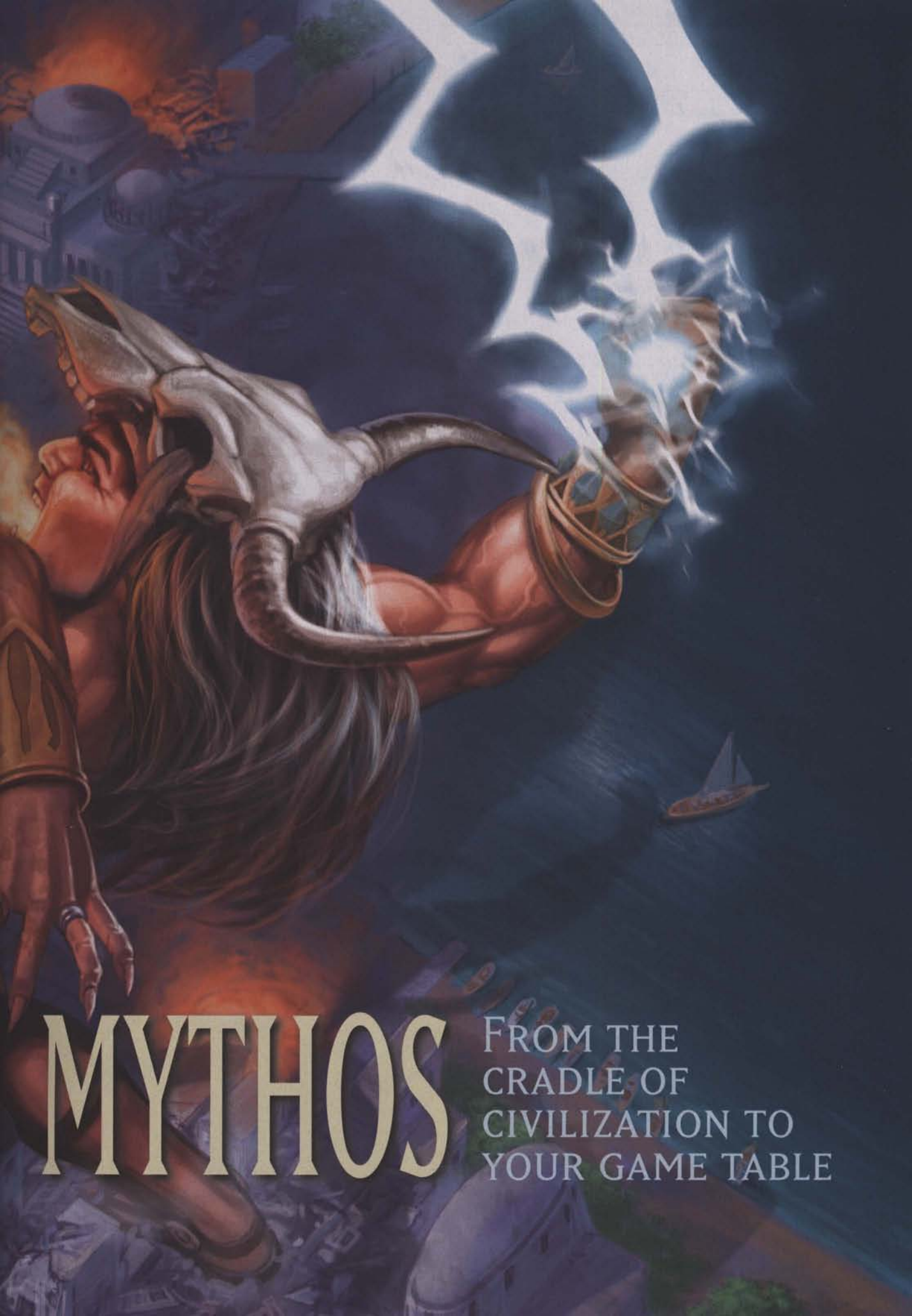
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He saw the great Mystery, he knew the Hidden.
He recovered the knowledge of all the times before the Flood.
He journeyed beyond the distant, he journeyed beyond exhaustion, and then carved his story on stone.
–The Epic of Gilgamesh

The ancient Mesopotamians, a number of related cultures that ruled the Middle East from 3000 BCE to the beginning of the Common Era, had strong ties to their gods. There were innumerable deities, including one for practically everything the people saw around them: animals, plants, minerals, and even emotions and occupations each had their own divine patron. The ancient Mesopotamian people thanked their gods for their prosperity and sought succor from them when things went bad. They spoke to their gods as if they were friends and relatives. (Some of the people even wrote letters to their gods.)

Change occurred only through the actions of gods. In order to achieve success, ancient Mesopotamian people believed one had to have the patronage of a god. Each city also had a patron deity and the prosperity of the city was a reflection of that god's power.

Mythologies are not static and details vary greatly over time as power centers rise and fall. The Mesopotamian pantheon as presented in this article is based mostly on its depiction in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. The real King Gilgamesh ruled the city of Uruk circa 2800 BCE, although *The Epic of Gilgamesh* itself was not put into writing until almost a millennium later. Stories of Gilgamesh's heroics were popular in many parts of the Middle East, and the epic poem was copied and recopied by scribes until the end of the first century BCE.

ADAD

(The Thunderer, The Violent)
Intermediate God (Chaotic Neutral)
At the first glimmer of brightening dawn, there rose on the horizon a dark cloud of black, and bellowing within it was Adad the Storm God. The stillness of the Storm God passed over the sky, and all that was bright then turned into darkness. He charged the land like a bull on the rampage; he smashed it to pieces like a vessel of clay. For a day the gale winds flattened the country, quickly they blew, and then came the Deluge. Like a battle, the cataclysm passed over the people. One man could not discern another, nor could people be recognized amid the destruction. Even the gods took fright at the Deluge, they left and went up to the heavens of Anu, lying like dogs curled up in the open.

Adad is the god of weather. He brings life-giving rain to the earth, but he also brings terrible storms and devastating floods. Farmers who rely on his rains venerate Adad for his generosity and pray for his forgiveness during droughts. Adad is also the patron of barbarians, who worship him as the god of strength. His throne sits upon a great black cloud, allowing him to direct his storms first-hand.

Adad's followers believe he is the source of all strength, but strength that is not tested atrophies. Without his life-giving rain, all living things would wither and die. The tree that is hardy weathers the storm, but the sickly tree does not. The more

Adad

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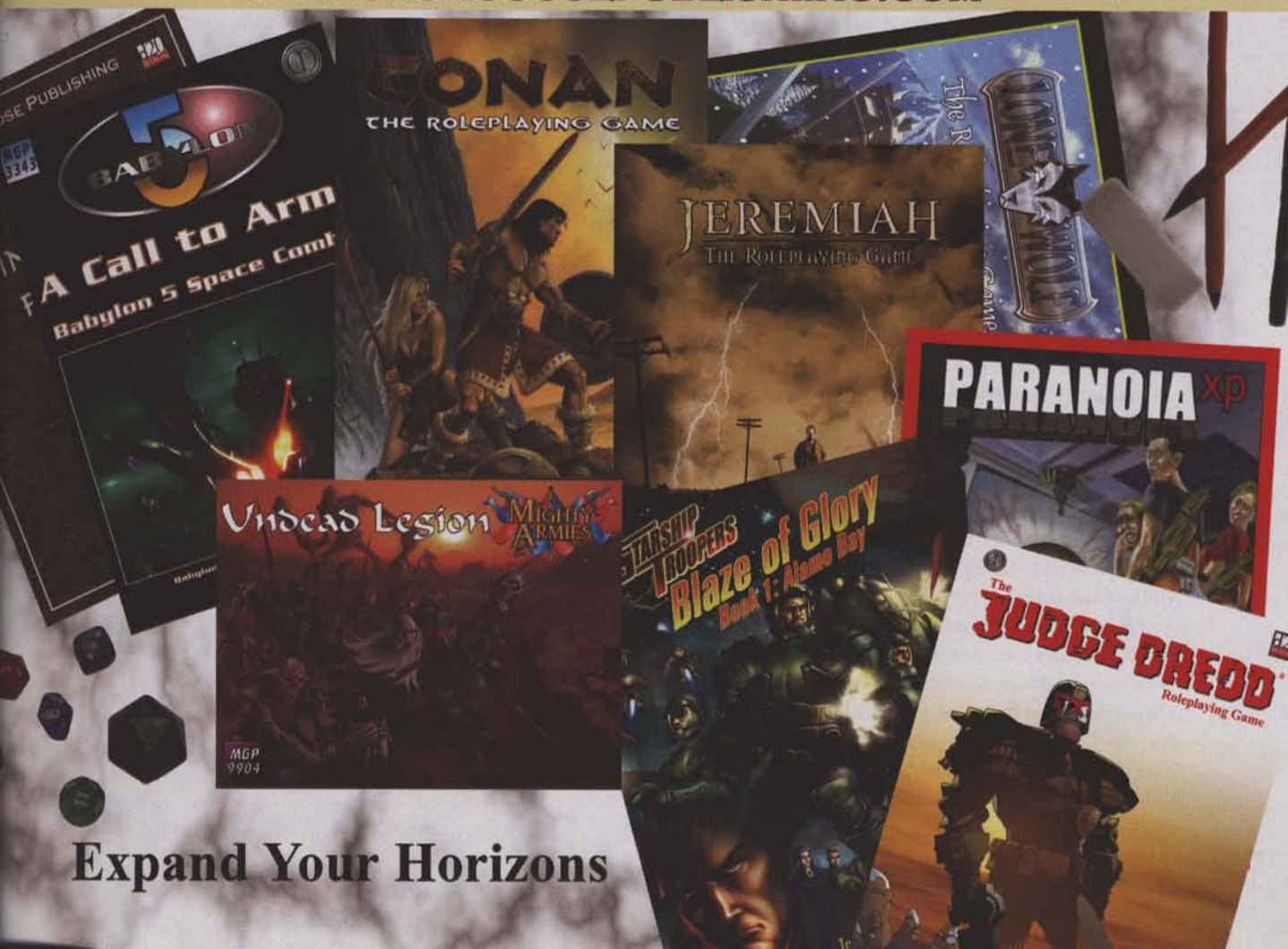

Expand Your Horizons

Mesopotamian Deities

Name	Portfolio	AL	Domains	Favored Weapon	Divine Rank
Adad	rain, storms, strength	CN	Air, Chaos, Strength, Water	warhammer	I
Anu	sky	LN	Law, Magic, Protection, Travel	mace	G
Belet-ili	earth	NG	Animal, Earth, Good, Healing, Plant	quarterstaff	G
Ea	fresh water, wisdom	LG	Good, Knowledge, Law, Water	trident	I
Enlil	atmosphere, law, order	LN	Air, Animal, Law, Protection	pick	I
Ereshkigal	Netherworld, the dead	LE	Death, Evil, Knowledge, Law	flail	I
Ishtar	love, war	CN	Animal, Chaos, Trickery, War	short sword	I
Marduk	defense against evil	LG	Fire, Law, Luck, War	net	L
Nergal	death, destruction, plagues	CE	Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil	mace	L
Ninurta	agriculture, athletes, youth	NG	Good, Plant, Strength, Travel	shortbow	L
Shamash	justice, sun, travelers	LG	Good, Knowledge, Law, Sun, Travel	scimitar	I
Sin	fertility, moon, time	N	Animal, Knowledge, Plant, Protection	spear	I

ardent followers of Adad face adversity to prove their strength.

Portfolio: Rain, storms, strength.

Domains: Air, Chaos, Strength, Water.

Cleric Training: Many clerics of Adad are recruited for their thunderous voices. All are encouraged to maintain physical fitness by working on farms or training with warriors.

Quests: Quests for Adad are usually accomplished through brute strength. Typical quests include destroying a dam that prevents runoff floods, protecting a forest from foreign loggers, and capturing a noble djinni that lives in the center of a lightning storm.

Prayers: People pray to Adad for rain, the cessation of storms, or strength in battle. Regardless of the request, loud drums and thunderous crashes must accompany such prayers to gain the attention of the storm god.

Temples: The solidly built temples of Adad are decorated with scenes of storms and human-headed bulls (the sacred animal of Adad). Sacred bowls collect rainwater that is made holy by the clerics, while other channels funnel rainwater to the main altar in a roaring fall.

Rites: Ceremonies worshiping Adad are as inconstant as the god himself. Prayers of thanks are given during periods of prolonged rain, after a successful battle, or while performing a physical endeavor. During droughts or extremely violent storms, the clerics lead followers in ceremonies to appease Adad.

Herald and Allies: Adad sends a chaotic neutral titan (with spell-like abilities as an evil titan) as his herald. Allies are bralani eladrins and Huge air and water elementals.

Anu

(Sky Father)

Greater God (Lawful Neutral)

Through tears Ishtar said to her father, Anu: "Again and again does Gilgamesh scorn me, telling tales of foulest slander against me." Anu said to Ishtar: "Ah, but was it not you who provoked King Gilgamesh that he spoke slander about you?" Ishtar said to her father: "Give me the Bull of Heaven, so in his dwelling I may slay Gilgamesh. If you do not give me the Bull of Heaven, I shall smash the gates of the Netherworld and bring the dead up to consume the living." Anu said to Ishtar: "If you want from me the Bull of Heaven, let the widow of Uruk gather seven years' chaff, let the farmer of Uruk grow seven years' grain." Ishtar said: "Seven years' chaff is already stored; seven years' grain is already grown. With the wrath of the Bull I shall have vengeance." Anu heard this, the Bull of Heaven's nose-rope he placed in her hands.

Anu is king of the heavens and father of the gods. He rarely acts directly, using the other gods to enact his will on earth. His children, the gods, often come to Anu for his judgment on an issue, or for assistance with their schemes. Anu is the patron of leaders, from the head of a household to the king of a city-state.

Followers of Anu believe that there is a place for everything, and everything belongs in its place. A leader should be like a father to his followers, caring but firm. It is the duty of the leader to

Anu

Belet-ili

make sure his followers are productive and happy, and they in turn must respect his will. Anu's followers work against leaders who abuse their positions or workers who shirk their duties.

Portfolio: Sky.

Domains: Law, Magic, Protection, Travel.

Cleric Training: If not leaders themselves, clerics of Anu act as advisors to those in power. Most clerics of Anu are the sons and daughters of nobles who are not in line for a position of power. These young devotees often take up the cause of Anu to better serve their siblings.

Quests: Followers of Anu resolve disagreements between rival patriarchs, depose tyrants who rule without the consent of their people, and recover artifacts stolen from the gods.

Prayers: Prayers to Anu almost never ask for his direct intercession, rather the worshiper asks the sky god to use his influence over one of his divine children. The petitioner might seek the aid of a specific deity or ask Anu to chastise a deity she believes to be working against her.

Temples: Temples dedicated to Anu are large structures befitting the father of the gods. They are often the center of temple complexes, and connected to temples of other gods. Many government buildings also contain small shrines to Anu for offerings and short prayers.

Rites: Clerics of Anu officiate over the installation of leaders and most importantly, the coronation of kings.

Herald and Allies: Anu's herald is a solar angel. Allies are hound archons, trumpet archons, and planetars.

Belet-ili

(Earth Mother, Ninhursaga, Aruru, Mammitum)

Greater Goddess (Neutral Good)

The tyranny of Gilgamesh grew, and the people of Uruk pleaded to Anu for succor. He said, "Let them summon Aruru, she that created mankind, so numerous. Let her create an equal of Gilgemesh, one mighty in strength, with a storm in his heart. Let them vie with each other, so Uruk may be rested." The goddess Aruru washed her hands, took a pinch of clay and threw it down into the wild. Thus she created Enkidu, the hero, born of silence, knit strong by Ninurta.

Belet-ili is the goddess of the earth, from stony barrens to verdant fields. She is the goddess of birth and is the spiritual mother of all gods and mortals, but especially heroes. She is known by many names in many regions, but she loves and watches over all of her children equally, as only a mother can.

Clerics of Belet-ili teach that all living things are her children and deserving of respect. Followers of the Earth Mother try to live in harmony with the natural world. Even when they eat a plant or animal, or offer it in sacrifice to a god, they must give thanks to the spirit of that creature. By treating the spirits around them with kindness, they believe they receive kindness from the world in return.

Portfolio: Earth.

Domains: Animal, Earth, Good, Healing, Plant.

Cleric Training: Adherents of Belet-ili all have a great love of nature, and her church has as many druids as clerics. Her clerics and druids learn to listen to nature spirits, and often advise those seeking the best places to grow crops, build a home, or hunt for game.

Quests: Typical quests include stopping people from over hunting a region, saving villagers from a flood, and preventing the destruction of a great forest threatened by fire.

Prayers: Worshipers of Belet-ili pray for fertility for themselves and their animals, abundance for their crops, and good fortune for their children.

Temples: Temples of Belet-ili are surrounded by gardens (or built on hanging gardens) and often have wild animals living among the plants. Temples dedicated to the Earth Mother are a good place to find healing for people or animals.

Rites: Followers of Belet-ili practice a number of seasonal rites in celebration of planting, growing, and harvesting. They also preside over births, and many act as midwives.

Herald and Allies: Belet-ili's herald is a 20th-level druid. Allies are huge earth elementals, xorn, and various celestial animals.

Ea

(Enki)

Intermediate God (Lawful Good)

Humans had become too numerous, and the gods agreed to send a deluge to destroy them. They swore an oath that none would intercede to save their own faithful. Ea took this oath and honored it. He wrote all that the gods had spoken that day on a wall, and his most faithful, Uta-napishti, read these words. With this knowledge, he built a boat to survive the flood, and loaded it with all his animals,

Ea

kith, and kin. Thus by his own hand did man save himself.

Ea is the god of wisdom. It is said he is the master of every craft and he knows the answer to every problem. He helped create the mortal races and gave them the knowledge necessary for civilization. Ea is the patron of all professions from farmers and blacksmiths to healers and seers. Ea is also the god of fresh water, a title he gained by defeating Apsu, the first consort of Tiamat. He is the keeper of the Ocean Below, the source of all fresh water.

People are always trying to redirect rivers, but in the end, water cannot be contained. Ea teaches that wisdom is like water—with the proper knowledge you can pass by any obstacle. Followers of Ea are encouraged to learn about all manner of things and to use that knowledge for the common good.

Portfolio: Crafts, fresh water, skills, and wisdom.

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Law, Water.

Cleric Training: Students who show an interest in learning might be encouraged to become clerics of Ea. Occasionally, a master craftsman retires from his labors to become a cleric of Ea.

Quests: Quests from Ea always require clever thinking to accomplish. Typical quests include channeling water to a remote outpost, devising a way to defeat an invulnerable monster, and uncovering Tiamat's latest evil scheme.

Prayers: People pray to Ea seeking inspiration from the Lord Below on a problem they face or when searching out fresh water in a barren land.

Temples: Temples to Ea are built on or near sources of fresh water. These temples often house a school where one can learn a craft or seek answers to difficult questions.

Rites: Followers of Ea celebrate learning. They perform blessings for students when they graduate and journeymen when they become masters. New discoveries in science or magic are considered gifts from Ea and are celebrated with special ceremonies.

Herald and Allies: Ea's herald is a 20th-level merfolk wizard. Allies are Medium water elementals, trumpet archons, and planetars.

ENLIL

Intermediate God (Lawful Neutral)

Seeking the timber for the city of Uruk, Gilgamesh and Enkidu went to the Forest of Cedar, which was guarded by the terrible ogre Humbaba. They subdued the monster, who offered them all the wood they could take if they would but spare his life. Gilgamesh would have spared Humbaba, but Enkidu told him to slay the ogre for although it would displease the gods, it would win fame for Gilgamesh. Humbaba cursed them, and told them that Enlil would punish them if he was slain. Gilgamesh slew the ogre. He gained his fame, but Enlil made sure they suffered the consequences.

As the god of air, Enlil controls the winds and the mists. He is the master of all that lies between his mother the earth (Belet-ili) and his father the sky (Anu), including the creatures that live on the earth. Enlil is patron of laws and lawmakers. He maintains order, but often without mercy—Enlil was the main proponent of the Deluge. He also created the monsters guarding forbidden places.

Enlil's consort is Ninlil, goddess of night.

Enlil instructs his followers to maintain the status quo. Society runs smoothest when people know their place and work hard at what they do. People who push the boundaries displease the gods and bring trouble for all.

Portfolio: Air, law, order.

Enlil

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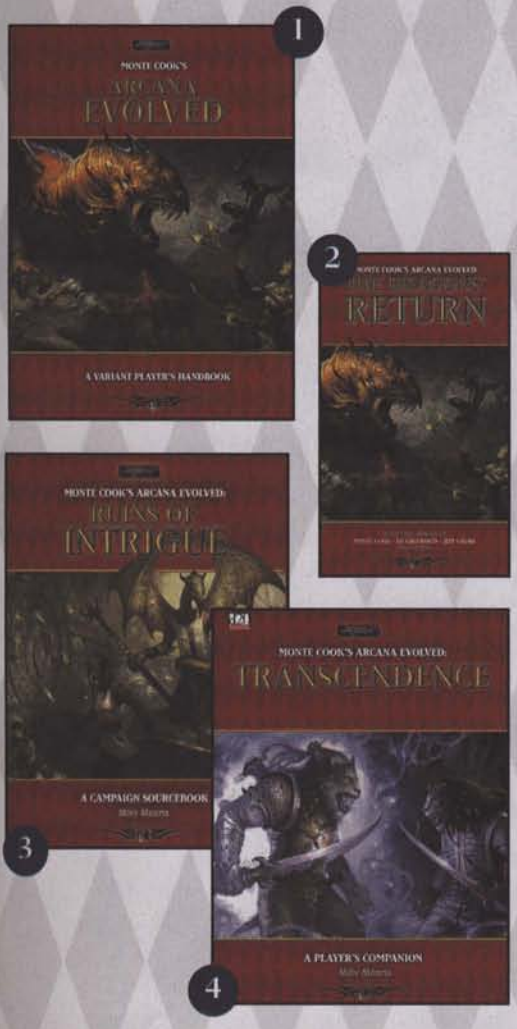

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Sword & Sorcery

Ereshkigal

Domains: Air, Animal, Law, Protection.

Cleric Training: Most who become clerics of Enlil do so because their fathers and grandfathers were clerics or lawmakers.

Quests: Followers of Enlil act to maintain order. Typical quests include resolving a boundary dispute, quashing a rebellion, and protecting a forbidden place from invaders.

Prayers: Many pray to Enlil seeking his approval for a new endeavor they plan to initiate, such as a business venture or a new law.

Temples: Temples to Enlil are tall structures, as if trying to bridge the gap between earth and sky. Temples of Enlil are never far from the meeting chambers of city patriarchs.

Rites: Clerics of Enlil oversee proposals made into law. They also give blessing to new buildings and farms.

Herald and Allies: Enlil's herald is a 28-Hit Die marut inevitable. Allies include formian taskmasters, formian myrmarchs, and hound archon heroes.

Ereshkigal

(Irkalla)

Intermediate Goddess (Lawful Evil)

Gilgamesh asked the ghost of Enkidu what it was like in the Netherworld: "Did you see the man who had fallen in battle?" Enkidu replied, "his father and mother cradle his head, his wife weeps." "Did you see the shade of him who has no one to make funerary offerings?" Enkidu replied, "he eats scrapings from the pot and crusts of bread thrown away in the street." "Did you see the little babies who know not names of their own?" Enkidu replied, "they play amid syrup and ghee at tables of silver and gold." "Did you see the man who was burnt to death?" Enkidu replied, "I did not see him. His ghost was not there. His smoke went up to the heavens."

Ereshkigal sits on the throne of the kingdom of the dead. Her court is made up of several minor gods (including Belet-seri, scribe of the Netherworld, and Namtar, god of doom) and all the dead kings and nobles since the beginning of time. The spirits of the dead are brought to her court, where she assigns them a place in the afterlife based on their deeds in life and the manner of their death. Ereshkigal has wings and clawed feet like a raptor, and wears the regalia of a queen.

Ereshkigal teaches that no man can escape his doom. Although death is inevitable, one must live life to the fullest to secure a desirable afterlife. One must always respect one's ancestors, as their deeds in life and intervention in the spirit realm are cause for one's own success.

Portfolio: The Netherworld, the dead, ancestral wisdom.

Domains: Death, Evil, Knowledge, Law.

Cleric Training: Clerics of Ereshkigal learn to hear the voices of the dead, and speak their will to the living. Although morbid, clerics of Ereshkigal do not divorce themselves from life. Rather, they are taught that success in life is reflected in the afterlife.

Quests: Typical quests include recovering the bones of a restless spirit and giving them a proper burial, punishing a person who offends his ancestors, and bringing a wizard who flouts death down to the Netherworld.

Prayers: Prayers to Ereshkigal generally concern ancestral spirits. The propitiator prays for the good treatment of his ancestors in the afterlife and hopes this causes the spirit to look favorably on him (especially in areas for which the ancestor was renown).

Temples: Temples of Erishkigal are somber buildings lined with alcoves where people may place offerings to their ancestral spirits. The clerics sell their services as mediums for those who wish to communicate with the dead.

Rites: Funerals are important to worshipers of Ereshkigal, but so are anniversaries that commemorate important heroes and rulers who have passed away. These rites often mimic the form of formal court ceremonies.

Herald and Allies: When Ereshkigal wishes to bring someone to her court, she sends a pit fiend devil as her herald. Allies are shadow mastiffs, bone devils, and ice devils.

Ishtar

(Inanna)

Intermediate Goddess (Chaotic Neutral)

Ishtar had become trapped in the Netherworld after a failed attempt to wrest control of it from her sister Ereshkigal. When after three days and nights, she had not returned, her servants mourned and pleaded with the gods to save her. Only Ea agreed to help, and he sent two golems into the Netherworld to give Ishtar the waters of life. Ishtar was revived, but demons followed her out of the underworld, saying they would hound her until she gave them a replacement. She could not bear to let them take any of her servants, but when she saw that her husband Dumuzi was not mourning her death, she gave him to the demons.

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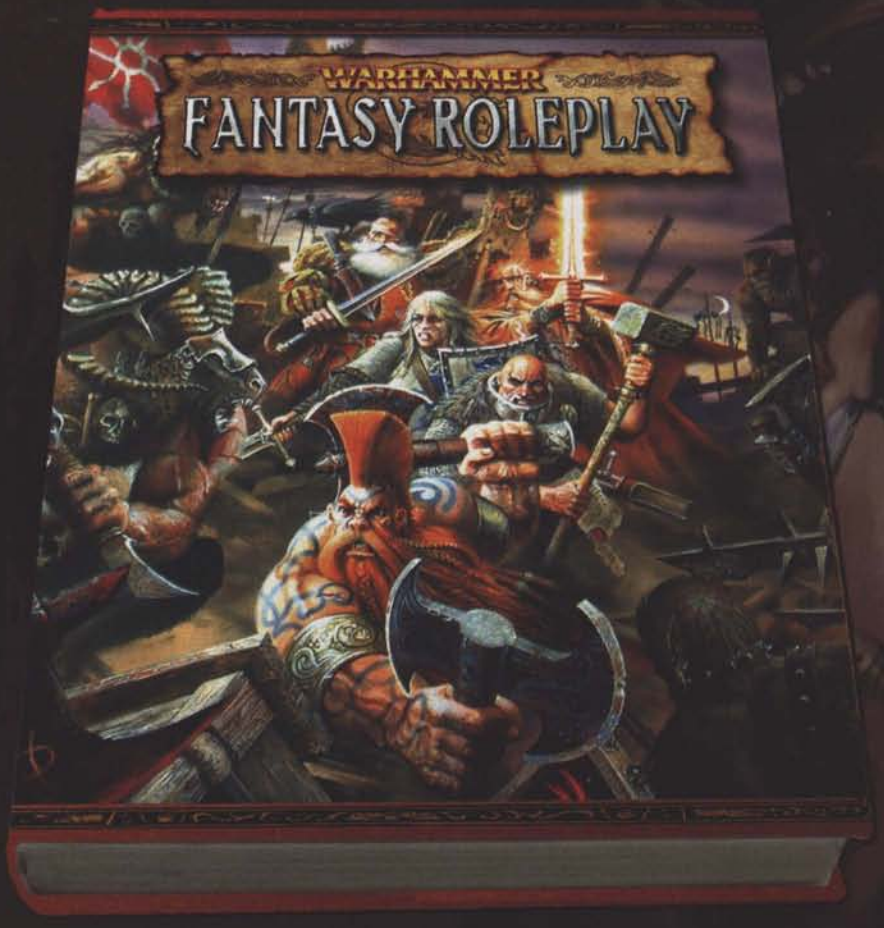

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Ishtar

Ishtar is the goddess of passion, as epitomized in love and war. She has a fiery temper and a long string of failed relationships. Her ex-lovers have a habit of suffering terrible tragedies. She is the patron of lovers, harlots, marriage, and pregnancy. However, she is also the patron of warlords and conquerors.

The central theme of Ishtar's philosophy is the pursuit of one's passion. Her followers are encouraged to find joy and love in life, and to help others find these ideals as well. However, like their goddess, followers of Ishtar have been known to use any means possible to get what they desire, only to cast it away when it no longer suits them.

Portfolio: Love, war.

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Trickery, War.

Cleric Training: Clerics of Ishtar are chosen for their ability to incite passion in others whether on the battlefield or in the boudoir. Many are chosen simply because they are surpassingly beautiful or handsome.

Quests: Ishtar involves herself wherever there is passion. Typical quests include recruiting a handsome youth to act as Ishtar's ceremonial husband, winning a battle against a rival army, and journeying to the Netherworld to reunite a star-crossed couple.

Prayers: Ishtar always accepts flattery, but to truly gain the goddess' attention, a worshipper must make an impassioned plea for her aid in gaining something (or someone) greatly desired.

Temples: Temples of Ishtar are sprawling buildings with many rooms, all lavishly decorated. In addition to standard temple services, worshipers may indulge themselves in a variety of sensual pleasures. One room in the temple is reserved for Ishtar herself, and none may enter without her invitation.

Rites: Clerics of Ishtar officiate over rites of marriage and courtship. They also lead ceremonies before a battle and celebrations after. Regardless of the occasion, the rites of Ishtar are always boisterous affairs filled with joy and revelry.

Herald and Allies: Ishtar's herald is a 20th-level bard. Allies are succubus demons, ghaele eladrins, and marilith demons.

MARDUK

Lesser God (Lawful Good)

Tiamat created an army of devils and dragons to invade the realm of the gods. Ea discovered her plan, but could not stop the invasion himself. The gods were fearful and none dared to face Tiamat's army. Ea suggested they send the hero Marduk. Marduk challenged Tiamat to single combat. They fought furiously, but he caught her in his net. With magic given to him by the elder gods, he vanquished Tiamat. Their leader defeated, the diabolic army fled back to the Netherworld.

Marduk, son of Ea, is legendary for his many battles against the evil Tiamat. He is the patron god of adventurers and exorcists, as well as anyone who faces evil monsters in physical or mystical combat. Marduk has two faces, and his eyes and mouths glow from the fire within him.

In the ethos of Marduk, evil wins when good people do nothing. It is the duty of every follower of Marduk to stand against the enemies of gods and mortals, including evil and chaotic outsiders, chromatic dragons, aberrations, and undead.

Portfolio: Defense against chaos and evil.

Domains: Good, Law, Luck, War.

Mard

Cleric Training: A potential cleric of Marduk must possess a strong will to resist evil magic. Novice clerics are taught how to identify minions of evil and destroy them.

Quests: Quests for Marduk almost always involve facing an evil entity. Typical quests include putting a malevolent ghost to rest, banishing an evil outsider, or slaying an ancient red dragon.

Prayers: Prayers to Marduk typically call on the god to protect the worshiper from evil spirits.

Temples: Marduk's temples are decorated with scenes of the god fighting Tiamat and her minions. People suffering from evil magic often find help at these temples.

Rites: The main holy day of Marduk is the Mesopotamian New Year, celebrated during the spring equinox, as the lengthening days and shorter nights are symbolic of Marduk's victory over the forces of evil.

Herald and Allies: Marduk's herald is an adult gold dragon. Allies are leonal guardinals, hound archons, and hound archon heroes.

NERGAL

(Errakal)

Lesser God (Chaotic Evil)

Ereshkigal sent her vizier Namtar to visit the gods in heaven and all stood to

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Ninurta

receive him save Nergal. When Ereshkigal heard of this, she was furious, and sent Namtar back up to heaven to bring her the disrespectful god so she might slay him. Her vizier did so. Following the advice of Ea, Nergal was able to avoid Ereshkigal's deadly traps, and when she tried to kill him herself, he overpowered her and made to kill her. To save her life, she offered to marry him, and he agreed.

Nergal is the god of unnatural death. He is the god of plagues, disasters, and war. He is the harshness of the desert. Although he revels in wanton destruction, Nergal also serves the gods as their enforcer. He punishes those who neglect their responsibilities to the gods.

Nergal

Nergal cares only about destruction. His followers, however, are not all mindless killers. Many serve as soldiers, executioners, bounty hunters, or assassins. Any death, whether murderous or justified, serves the death god.

Portfolio: Death, plagues, destruction.

Domains: Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil.

Cleric Training: Anyone who takes pleasure in killing may be called to become a cleric of Nergal. Many clerics originate from the ranks of fighters or rogues before devoting themselves to Nergal.

Quests: Wherever there is death and destruction, Nergal is involved. Typical quests include preventing medicine from arriving to a plague-ridden settlement, inciting a war between rival cities, and conjuring a powerful demon.

Prayers: Rarely does anyone pray to Nergal and then it's usually a plea for mercy from the god's ravages. Those few who worship the god of death ask for Nergal's blessing as they plan out the acts of violence they plan to commit.

Temples: Nergal's temples are usually small and nondescript. The death god's followers do not seek attention, and most folk are glad not to give them any. In evil-aligned cities, temples to Nergal might take on more prominence, attracting fighters who worship him as a war god.

Rites: It is whispered that the followers of Nergal celebrate bloody wars and rampant plagues with debased and unholy rituals. Sometimes these rituals are blamed for causing such tragedies.

Herald and Allies: Nergal's herald is a balor demon. Allies include howlers, vrock demons, and death slaads.

NINURTA

(Lord Plough)

Lesser God (Neutral Good)

The fiendish griffin Anzu had tricked Enlil and stolen the Tablets of Destiny. Anu asked the gods who would recover the sacred Tablets, but none would dare, for Anzu's aerie was atop an inaccessible mountain. Ea stepped forward, and told the assembled gods that his son Ninurta could reach the lair of the storm-bird. Ninurta made the journey as no other could. With the aid and encouragement of his divine father, he slew Anzu and recovered the Tablets.

Ninurta is the god of agriculture, growth, and youthful vigor. He acts as the messenger of gods, able to climb, swim, and fly like no other. For this reason he is the patron of athletes and hunters.

Ninurta teaches his followers to look after and encourage growing things such as plants, animals, and children. Those who are young find themselves encouraged to hone their physical abilities and become productive members of society (especially in agricultural fields). Older followers are charged with the education of young people and helping them through the stages of life.

Portfolio: Agriculture, youth, athletics, hunting.

Domains: Good, Plant, Strength, Travel.

Cleric Training: Clerics of Ninurta are expected to contribute to their community. Many of the faithful work as teachers or trainers, while others work on farms.

Quests: Typical quests include hunting a dire lion, protecting a young prince from assassins, or delivering a message to Siduri, innkeeper at the Pub at the Edge of the World.

Prayers: Ninurta is often beseeched by farmers who wish their plants and animals to grow abundant and by parents who wish their children to be healthy and strong. Often these prayers are directed at Ea, asking him to use his influence on his son. An athlete about to compete in a competition might say a quick prayer to Ninurta, thanking him for his gifts.

Temples: Temples of Ninurta are decorated with images of young people in pastoral scenes, often connected to schools, gymnasiums, or gardens.

Rites: Clerics of Ninurta practice seasonal rites to aid developing plants and animals. They also perform ceremonies that mark a child's passage to adulthood. Clerics of Ninurta often preside over athletic events.

Herald and Allies: Ninurta's herald is a fresh-faced titan. Allies are bralani eladrins, astral deva angels, and elder arrowhawks.

SHAMASH

(Utu)

Intermediate God (Lawful Good)

As Enkidu lay on his deathbed, he appealed to Shamash, asking the sun god to curse the harlot Shamhat who had taken him out of the wild and made him civilized. Enkidu heaped many curses on her, saying: "Because she made me weak, I who was undefiled!" Shamash heard what he had spoken and straight away from the sky there cried out a voice: "O, Enkidu, why do you curse Shamhat, who fed you bread fit for a god, and poured you ale that was fit for a king, who clothed you in splendid garments, and gave you as companion the handsome Gilgamesh?"

Shamash

Shamash is the sun god. As he passes across the sky, he sees all that happens on the earth below. He is the judge of the gods and the patron of mortal judges. He is also the constant companion of any who travel by day. Shamash is renowned for his wisdom and mercy and frequently appears surrounded by a corona of light.

Shamash's bride is Aya, goddess of dawn.

Followers of Shamash believe in the rule of law, but not at the expense of mercy. They practice fairness in all their dealings as the teachings of Shamash say that light shall expose all deception. They are also expected to give aid to those in need, especially travelers.

Portfolio: Sun, justice, travelers.

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Law, Sun, Travel.

Cleric Training: To become a cleric of Shamash one must uphold the ideals

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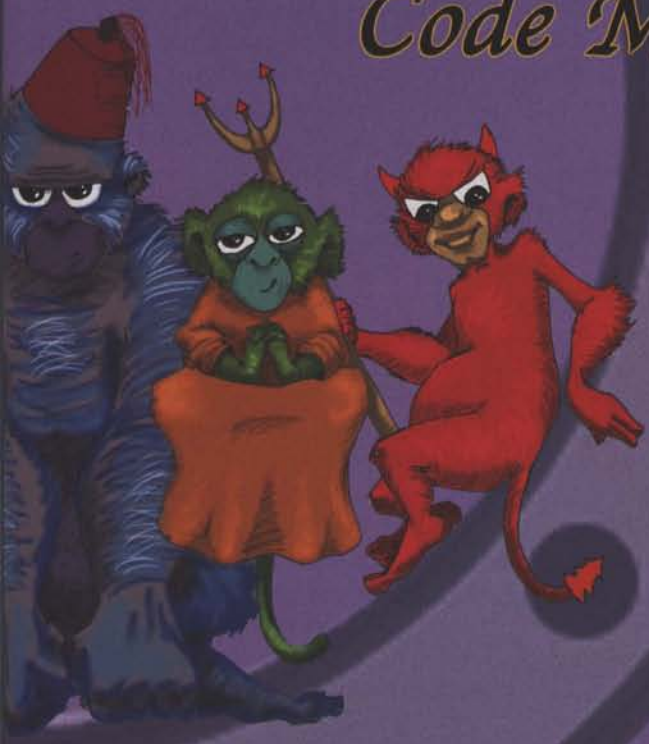

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of honesty and kindness. In addition to ecclesiastical teachings, clerics of Shamash are often versed in secular law.

Quests: Followers of Shamash actively promote the causes of justice and mercy. Typical quests include protecting pilgrims in the desert, bringing a criminal to justice, or defeating a monster that blocks a trade route.

Prayers: A traveler seeking aid or a person seeking justice for wrongdoing speaks directly to Shamash in the form of the sun, asking the god to intercede on her behalf.

Temples: Temples to Shamash are painted white and have many windows and skylights. They are fequently decorated with reflective materials that serve to channel the sun's light into them during the day. Temples to the sun god are often connected to courts of law or traveler's hostels.

Rites: Worship of Shamash follows the movement of the sun. The most important prayers occur at the dawning of the sun, but other are made at noon and dusk, with special ceremonies to mark the solstices.

Herald and Allies: Shamash's herald is a solar angel. Allies are hound archons, couatl, and planetar angels.

Sin

(Nanna)

Intermediate God (Neutral)

Ninlil, goddess of night, was warned by her mother not to go down to the river lest Enlil see her and fall in love. Ninlil went down to the river and was seen by Enlil, who fell in love with her. He seduced her by the river. When the other gods learned of Enlil's indiscretion, they cast him out. Enlil wandered down to the Netherworld, but Ninlil followed him. She was pregnant with his child. Of their union was born Sin, who was placed in the sky to give light in darkness.

Sin is the god of the Moon. He is the god of time, as shown by the cycle of the moon, and he governs the fertility of people, animals, and plants all measured by this cycle. The waxing and waning of the moon represents the eternal struggle of good and evil, and Sin is the patron of defensive magic. As the keeper of time, Sin knows the past and guards the secrets of the future.

Cycles represent a central theme in Sin's philosophy. Like the moon, all things wax and wane in a steady rhythm. If one of these cycles is disrupted, lasting too long or ending too soon, it's the duty of followers of Sin to set it right. Thus all forces remain in balance.

Portfolio: Moon, time, fertility, defense.

Domains: Animal, Knowledge, Plant, Protection.

Cleric Training: Astronomy is an important part of training for clerics of Sin. They learn what sidereal signs correspond with various terrestrial events (such as the proper times to sow and reap). As well as clerics, the church of Sin has a number of druids in its clergy.

Quests: The purpose of a quest for Sin is often cryptic even to the faithful. Typical quests include helping an aging king choose his successor, protecting villagers from a lycanthrope, or collecting rare components for a powerful magical item.

Prayers: People pray to Sin in hopes he might grant them a glimpse of the future.

Sin

Prayers to Sin involve the recitation of the moon god's many honorific titles (Keeper of Time, Lord of Destinies, and so on).

Temples: Temples to the moon god are built atop ziggurats, allowing the clergy to better track the movements of the moon, stars, and planets.

Rites: Followers of Sin celebrate the passage of time such as the phase of the moon, the changing seasons, and births and deaths.

Herald and Allies: Sin's herald is a 20th-level cleric (with access to all of Sin's domains). Allies are janni genies, invisible stalkers, and elder arrowhawks.

Apsu, Tiamat, and the Tablets of Destiny

In the primordial chaos, there existed only Tiamat the sea of salt water and Apsu the sea of fresh water. The joining of these two gave birth to gods. Apsu became annoyed with his children and sought to destroy them. Tiamat spoke against his plan, but Apsu would not be swayed. Ea learned of the doom that awaited the gods and, taking matters unto his own hands, slew Apsu. Thus Ea took over the portfolio of Apsu. Tiamat became enraged by the death of her consort and now stands in opposition to the gods.

In the Mesopotamian Mythos, Tiamat is not only the goddess of evil dragons, but also the personification of the salt water ocean that surrounds the land. She does not seek the destruction of the gods, but rather to steal the Tablets of Destiny. The Tablets are a powerful artifact that grants their possessor power over fate. Possession of the Tablets changes many times throughout the tales. On many occasion Tiamat sends her draconic and diabolic minions to steal the Tablets of Destiny, but always the gods find a way to thwart them.

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Warrior [Uropygi]

CDR*: 1
Weight: 550 kg
IQ: 30

Very aggressive. High agility in any combat environment. Exoskeleton can withstand temperatures in excess of 500°c. Low intelligence, excellent follow-through.

Weapons: Cutting/chewing mandibles. Jaws exert in excess of 4,000 foot-pounds/kg.
Ground Speed: Cross-country – 64 km/hr. Acceleration (0–50 km) – 7.2 seconds

Worker [Lasius Noir]

CDR*: 3
Weight: 500 kg
IQ: 18

Non-aggressive. Capable of lifting ten times its own body weight. Ingests rock sediment and regurgitates cement-like substance for engineering purposes.

Load Speed: Cross-country – 35 kh/hr, 60% slope – 8 km/hr
Weapons: Claws and mandibles dangerous at close range.

Hopper [Opiliones]

CDR*: 1
Weight: 485 kg
IQ: 30

Very aggressive. Jumping and short-range flight capable.
Weapons: See warrior specifications.
Ground Speed: See warrior specifications.
Jump Range: 50 m
Glide Ratio: 1–3
Air Speed: Up to 341 kh/hr

Plasma [Solifugae]

CDR*: 3
Weight: 7 metric tins
IQ: 18

Non-aggressive. Generates one-time only accelerated burst of high-energy plasma. The plasma bug is chemically stable until contact with the breeder. Can be fired ballistically or aimed with precision into high planetary orbit. **Weapons:** High-energy plasma.
Ground Speed: less than 2 km/hr

Tanker [Amblypygi]

CDR*: 1
Weight: 3.5 metric tons
IQ: 35

Very aggressive. Fast in tight situations. One metric tone bio-corrosive reservoir. Effective range of bio-corrosive is unknown but thought to be under 50 metres.
Weapons: Sprays highly bio-corrosive fluid. Cutting/chewing mandibles.
Speed: Cross-country – 35 km/hr

Brain [Cerebus Rex]

CDR*: Unknown
Weight: Unknown
IQ: Unknown
Ground Speed: Unknown

*Combat Danger Rating

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The Petit Tarrasque and Other Monsters

A Bestiary of the Real World

Monsters thrive in all the known worlds. The diligent student of monster lore finds some of the same species in every corner of the multiverse, the most basic types adapting to an incredible variety of conditions. Surprisingly, recent studies seem to show that many of these widespread monsters originated on the small and comparatively tame Material Plane world of Earth (not to be confused with the elemental plane). Basilisks, golems, and the mighty tarrasque, among others, make their earliest known appearance in the myths of the Greeks and other ancient Earth cultures, and in the bestiaries of medieval Europe.

However, an adventurer facing the creatures described in these early sources might not recognize them, let alone anticipate the strange abilities they display. Eyewitness accounts and studies conducted by sages provide enough details to confirm that these monsters were indeed the primal forms of their more widely-known kin, but differing in appearance, diet, habitat, and powers. Some offer less of a challenge to an opponent, while others present a much greater danger.

Perhaps the differences between the primal and the common forms of these monsters indicate magical intervention. Certainly, something gave these creatures the impetus to

leave their native environments. Other possible explanations for their spread include gates and vortices forming spontaneously between worlds and the actions of planar travelers. Once a creature enters a new environment, simple evolution sees to its slow but inevitable change. Nevertheless, it is possible, even likely, that the primal forms linger on in distant regions, even of the world where they once roamed freely.

The Tarrasque

The tarrasque derives its name, feared across a thousand worlds, from the town of Tarascon on the river Rhône in southern France. To this day the town honors Saint Martha of Bethany, who single-handedly defeated the creature.

The Christian religion accords Saint Martha some status beside her sister, Saint Mary Magdalene, and brother, Saint Lazarus. Although not numbered (at least officially) among the disciples of Jesus, the family hosted him multiple times. Their story as contained in the Bible stops shortly after Jesus' own death and resurrection. However, other sources such as the *Golden Legend*, written by Jaques de Voragine in the thirteenth century CE, say that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus left their home in Bethany and traveled to southern France (known at the time as Gaul). They introduced Christianity to the natives and Mary founded the bloodline of the French kings. Martha went to Tarascon, presumably hearing that all was not well.

The *Golden Legend* describes the tarrasque as a kind of dragon, larger than an ox, part animal and part fish with teeth like swords, long horns, and the tail of a fish. Whenever it left its lair on the bank of the Rhône, a massive flood wave destroyed crops and property. Worse, when it left its lair it did so to hunt, and human flesh topped its list of preferred foods. Thus, the citizens of Tarascon no longer dared to pass beyond their city walls. Upon hearing the people's plight, Saint Martha went into the countryside to confront the monster and tamed it by applying holy water. Leading it back to Tarascon, she explained about the power of faith to the townspeople, who cut off its head to make sure the monster would never again pose a threat. Apparently, the nearby city of Aix-en-Provence once exhibited a massive fossilized head as that of the tarrasque.

This all happened in the first century CE, so it wouldn't be surprising if later chroniclers lost some details. To emphasize Saint Martha's power and grace, these chroniclers also possibly downplayed the struggle. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the creature faced by Saint Martha was not the gigantic engine of destruction that terrorizes so many today. Other medieval sources indicate the biblical Leviathan spawned the tarrasque, so this creature was possibly a juvenile that either had siblings or managed to regenerate its head.

To represent the Gaul Tarrasque, use the statistics for a young bronze dragon with the following changes: Make its Intelligence 3, Wisdom 12, and Charisma 12. It has no fly speed or breath weapon. Add regeneration and a gore attack that deals 1d8+2 points of damage. The Gaul Tarrasque has the spell-like ability to cast *control water* three times per day as a 15th-level caster, but has no other spell-like abilities. Saint Martha's action with the holy water is considered a miracle.

Basilisks and Cockatrices

In ancient Greek, the word *basilikos* meant "little king." The Roman author Pliny the Elder, in his *Natural History* of the first century CE, applied it to a small snake no more than twelve fingers in length, found in the Greek province of Cyrene. The basilisk earned the title of "king of serpents" firstly through a white mark upon its head resembling a diadem, and secondly for its extreme poisonousness. Forget about being bitten: the basilisk slew with a glance and exuded a toxic miasma into the air. Its presence destroyed all grass and foliage and even split the rocks wherein it laired. One basilisk could turn a fertile farm into a desert. Should a warrior attempt to kill it, prudently using a spear from on horseback, its venom traveled up the spear and killed both warrior and horse.

This scourge had only one natural enemy: the weasel. It also fled from the sound of a rooster's crow. Travelers passing through desert badlands took roosters with them to ward off the danger.

Pliny's book survived the collapse of Roman civilization and was very well regarded in later years. The majority of the creatures he described also survived. In the 6th century, another scholar, Saint Isidore of Seville, included the basilisk in his *Etymologies*. He added to the above information the fact that the basilisk, or one kind of basilisk, killed by the sound of its hissing alone. It was therefore named "susurrus."

The word cockatrice appeared only later, in the Middle Ages. It referred to a creature with the powers and weaknesses of Pliny's basilisk, but having the head of a rooster atop reptilian wings and legs. Some sources described it as a tiny dragon, or possessing a dragon's head on the end of its tail. This hideous thing hatched from an egg laid by a rooster—said to sometimes happen spontaneously in late summer—then incubated by a toad. However, the same creature is frequently referred to in bestiaries as a basilisk. Both basilisk and cockatrice are used in varying editions of the King James Bible (first published in 1611) as the name of something very poisonous encountered by the prophet Isaiah.

What to make of this confusion? Especially as the cockatrice and the more generally known basilisk both turn their victims to stone? The description of the cockatrice's genesis suggests a purposeful magical mutation of the snake-form, perhaps aiming to rid the creature of its fear of roosters. According to George Caspard Kirchmayer's 1691 essay, "On the Basilisk," the last known eyewitness report of either creature occurred in the city of

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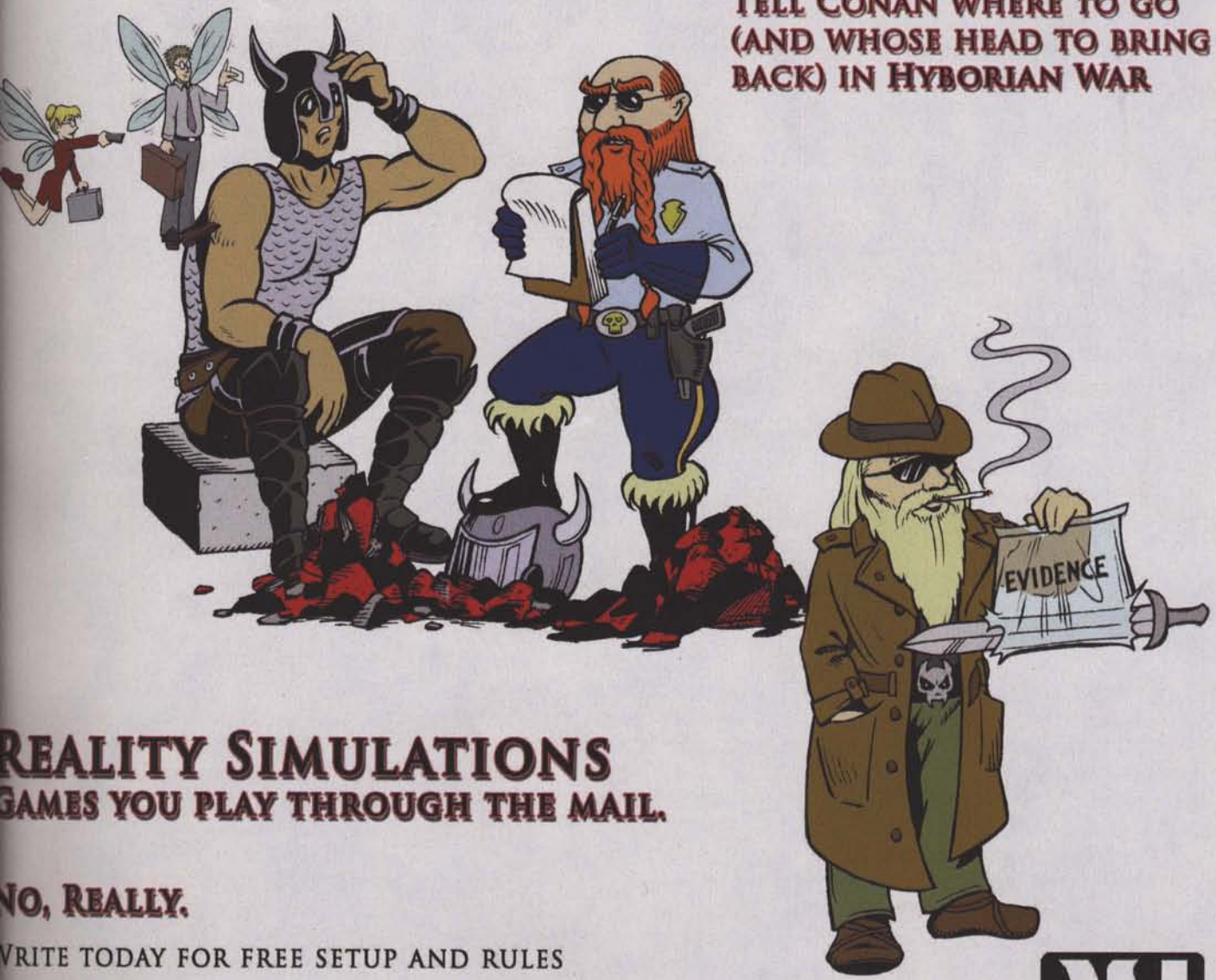

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Warsaw in the year 1537. Two children and their nurse entered a disused cellar and fell dead on the spot. The presence of a basilisk was suspected. Eventually a condemned criminal agreed to take on the monster and entered the cellar armed with a torch and an iron rake. He brought out the body of a spotted lizard with a rooster's head and feet.

To represent the Greek Basilisk, give an ordinary viper a bodak's death gaze, poison bite (Injury DC 15, initial and secondary damage 2d12 hp), and the benefit of a permanent *acid fog* spell centered on itself (caster level 11th). Weasels and roosters are immune to all these effects, and in the presence of a rooster the Greek Basilisk must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or become panicked. Any creature that makes a successful melee attack on the Greek Basilisk is subject to the Greek Basilisk's poison as if the basilisk had bitten it.

If a susurrus is desired, add to the above the spell-like ability to cast *greater shout* (with a loud hiss replacing a shout) as a full-round action.

To represent the Polish Cockatrice, begin with the standard cockatrice but strip away its petrification ability. In its place, add a bodak's death gaze, poison bite (Injury DC 15, initial and secondary damage 2d12 hp), and the benefit of a permanent *acid fog* spell centered on itself (caster level 11th). Weasels are immune to all these effects. Any creature that makes a successful melee attack on the Polish Cockatrice is subject to the Polish Cockatrice's poison as if the cockatrice had bitten it. Being unnaturally created, Polish Cockatrices usually appear singly rather than in flocks.

Golems

Gelem is a Hebrew word meaning an unformed substance. During the Middle Ages, the derived word "golem" came to mean—among Jews and Christians alike—a magically animated construct controlled by its creator.

Starting around the 1st century CE, the Jews developed a striking form of mysticism based on the Hebrew language known as *kabbalah*. *Kabbalah* enabled a true master to imitate God, creating life from non-living matter. A rabbi attaining such wisdom and holiness commanded deep respect, and many notable Jews of the Middle Ages were said to have golem servants.

The creation of a golem by the Rabbi Uehunda Loew (also known as the Maharal) in Prague in 1580 is well-recorded, especially in the Jewish chronicle *Miracles of the Maharal*, compiled in the 17th century. He created the golem to guard the Jewish quarter of the city, which was unusual: Most rabbis used golems to perform repetitive, manual labor alone. The rabbi and his two disciples sculpted a humanoid body from clay. A lengthy ritual infused this body with a spirit, transforming the golem into a perfect simulacra of a human being, save only that it could not speak. No human creation could ever be as perfect as God's, so all golems shared this flaw.

The *Miracles of the Maharal* reports the golem performed its task well for a time, patrolling the streets and scaring off Christians. However, it gradually developed dangerous strength and an independent will. The rabbi was forced to undo his work, reducing it again to lifeless clay.

Except for the golem's human appearance, this accords with golemcraft as generally known. Subsequent variations in the substance and abilities of golems are the refinements of individual wizards. Rabbi Loew's golem is notable for his efficient method of controlling the golem. The animation ritual involved inscribing the Hebrew word for truth, *emet*, on its forehead. To destroy it, the rabbi erased the "e," leaving *met*, the Hebrew word for death.

To represent the Golem of Prague, use a clay golem under a permanent *veil* spell and decide upon its age. Freshly created, the Golem of Prague has no intelligence and no chance of breaking free from its creator's control. After 6 months, it gains an Intelligence of 1 and a 5% percent chance of breaking free if given a dangerous or demeaning task. The golem's Intelligence and chance of breaking free increases at this rate of +1 and 5%, respectively, every six months until after five years it reaches its maximum of a 10 Intelligence and a 50% chance of breaking free. It retains the *emet* weakness, although this is not readily visible in its human guise. To its tremendous frustration, it never gains the ability to speak.

Gorgons, Medusas, and the Catoblepas

This is a classic example of how the names of monsters change and grow confused as later generations retell the stories, and the problems this causes any researcher trying to establish the truth.

The ancient Greek legend is very clear: Gorgons have the bodies of women but hideous faces and hair formed of living snakes. The gazes of these creatures turn living beings to stone. The legend identifies three gorgons, once sisters of great beauty who boasted they were fairer than Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom (by any reckoning an unwise thing to do). As punishment, Athena transformed them into monsters and banished them to the land of Hyperborea, which if not already a barren waste soon became so. Their names were Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa.

In the broader multiverse, of course, medusa is the name given to a race matching the description of the mythic Medusa. Some kind of connection is obvious. Visitors to Earth might have picked up the name and applied it to the more common monsters. On the other hand, the race of medusas might possibly have an earthly ancestor. Medusa herself is specified as dying at the hands of the Greek hero Perseus.

However, "gorgon" is the common name of a metal-scaled, magical bull that turns its victims to stone with its breath. In some medieval bestiaries, this is also the name given to a crea-

ture called the catoblepas. At least ten centuries earlier than those medieval bestiaries, Pliny described a scaly, bull-like creature native to Ethiopia and notable for possessing a disproportionately large head for its body—too large, in fact, for the creature to raise. In Greek, its name means "that which looks downwards." However, this was a very good thing, as the gaze of the catoblepas was reputedly deadly. On this basis, then, it was referred to as a gorgon, despite the fact it did not petrify its victims.

Both the catoblepas as described by Pliny and the bull-like "gorgon" are comparatively common throughout the known worlds and are discrete species. Such creatures would never be confused by anyone who witnessed both. The gorgon, therefore, does not appear to be an Earthly monster. Perhaps some plane-traveling medieval wizard is responsible for perpetuating this bizarre name duplication.

HAGS

Throughout the multiverse the races of hags are commonly feared, if not with the same universality as the tarrasque.

The *Mabinogion* is a collection of tales forming a legendary history of Wales. It was first written down in the 14th century CE, but the tales it recorded were by then already ancient. Hags in these tales are female warriors of superhuman prowess. They go armed and armored, conquering and ruling realms. Often, the greatest feat of the story's hero is to overcome a hag in battle. For instance, in the tale of Peredur, the young man overcomes one of the hags of Gloucester, who promises that he shall dwell at her court and she and her sisters will teach him swordsmanship and horsemanship. These hags are nowhere described as ugly or aged. Interestingly, they take their titles from their mothers, such as "the Black Hag, daughter of the White Hag" in the same way that Welsh nobleman are always the son of someone.

The Irish tale cycle, the *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, includes a very similar story. Here the young warrior, Cúchulainn, journeys from Ireland to England seeking the chieftainess Scathath, "the Shadowy One," to learn from her the feats of a hero. The *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, like the *Mabinogion*, is an ancient set of stories written down comparatively late.

A Scottish tale cycle, known through a 16th century CE manuscript entitled (after its author) "The Dean of Lismore's Book," concerns the overthrow of Queen Beira, mighty goddess of winter, by her son the Summer King. Six hags, magical beings with control over storms who drive chariots through the sky, serve Queen Beira. Still they are warriors, following their Queen into exile and attempting by various stratagems to win back her realm. In due course, they succeed—in Autumn. Queen Beira is almost certainly the same entity known in later times as "Gentle Annis," a blue-skinned old woman who walked the Scottish Highlands protecting animals and wild places, who could be terrible in her wrath. Later still, she may have become "Black Annis."

The legend of Black Annis, current in 15th century Leicestershire, England, proves that the resemblance between these hags and those ghastly creatures that bear their names is no accident. Described as hideous, one-eyed, and blue-faced, Black Annis dwelt in a woodland cave, emerging at night to hunt for human flesh—especially the flesh of children. "Annis," of course, is the name by which blue-skinned hags are known everywhere. However, the exact nature of the connection, and why the hag race has sunk into evil when their ancestors were simply warriors and servants of a nature goddess, is unknown.

To represent the British Hag, provide the Annis with arms and armor and remove its susceptibility to bludgeoning weapons and its spell-like abilities. Although the British Hag may be cruel, it is honorable and loyal, having much the same motives as any ambitious warrior. It might also have a normal, human appearance (or at least seem to).

LEUCROTTA

Many residents of the Material Plane world of Faerûn consider the leucrotta a native species. Not so. According to Pliny, this creature originated in India, where a male hyena mated with a lioness. The result haunted the edges of civilization, developing a reputation for cunning and a preference for eating people.

The leucrotta, or *krokotta*, first appears in the *Indica* of Ctesias, a Greek who was the royal physician of the Persian court in the late 5th century BCE. He refers to a beast imitating a human voice to lure men outside at night, whereupon it devoured them. Without describing its appearance, he credits it with the courage of a lion, the speed of a horse and the strength of a bull, and he says it cannot be harmed by weapons of steel.

About the size of a donkey, the primal leucrotta's motley appearance resembles that of several descendents: a horselike head with powerful jaws, the chest and forelegs of a lion, and hindquarters of a stag with cloven hooves. Its mouth reached from ear to ear, displaying the characteristic bony ridges instead of teeth. However, its completely rigid backbone prevented it from ever turning its head.

The primal leucrotta's most remarkable trait was the ability to imitate the sound of human voices. However, it displayed no real intelligence. Given its habits, its main exposure to human language probably consisted of cries for help, which then proved useful for luring its prey into ambushes.

Some later authorities, such as Conrad Gesner in his 16th century *History of Animals*, considered the leucrotta related to or possibly the same creature as the manticora, another hybrid from the same part of the world, also known to attack and eat humans. He

reported that Indians managed to train young leucrottas as mounts valued for their speed.

Moving to Faerûn, the leucrotta gained greater intelligence, as well as evil tendencies and a normal spine. This possibly shows fiendish influence, in which case the leucrotta might be found in many more worlds before long.

To represent the Indian Leucrotta, reduce the leucrotta's Intelligence to 2 and its Dexterity to 9 to represent its inflexible backbone. The Indian Leucrotta cannot see behind itself, but it has exceptional hearing that grants it blindsight to a range of 40 feet. It also gains a rake attack that deals 1d4+2 points of damage (thanks to its leonine forelegs) upon a successful bite and grapple.

Salamanders

Yet another monster catalogued by Pliny. Pliny described the salamander as a small, spotted lizard that generated incredible cold within its own body. It extinguished fires when placed in them and cooled hot water likewise. It also spat a poisonous, milky matter that caused any living flesh it fell upon to wither and lose all hair—the end result looking like a case of advanced leprosy. If a salamander drank from or died in a vessel of wine or water, that vessel became poisoned.

Saint Isidore, who clearly felt a duty to confirm and update Pliny's research, added that if a salamander so much as climbed into a fruit tree, all the fruit upon the tree became poisonous, and that the creatures lived within fires "without pain and without being consumed" as well as extinguishing them. Later bestiaries indicated the salamander sometimes took the shape of a man within the flames.

Marco Polo, a merchant and traveler in the 13th century CE, disagreed. In the chronicle of his travels from Italy to China and back, he insisted that a salamander was no lizard but rather a substance found in the ground. This substance, when treated properly, formed fibers that could be weaved into a cloth impervious to fire.

Polo's obviously mistook the mineral asbestos for a "salamander." Just as clearly, Pliny's and Isidore's lizard was entirely different from the creatures known as salamanders on the Elemental Plane of Fire. Most likely, wizards summoning true salamanders learned the name and then applied it to the native Earth reptile.

To represent the Earthly Salamander, use the statistics for a tiny monstrous centipede, adding a ranged spit attack (5-foot range) that deals poison damage alone. If desired, increase the potency of the salamander's poison to that of a larger-sized monstrous centipede. Placing an Earthly Salamander in liquid creates an equivalent ingested poison (and a colder liquid). The Earthly Salamander deals 1d8 points of cold damage per round to anyone handling it without protection and has both immunity to fire and the spell-like ability to cast *quench* as a 5th-level caster when actually in contact with flames.

Many more monsters once existed on Earth and certainly, many more potential emigrants remain to be investigated. The author knows her claim of such a small and isolated generating point for so many creatures is contentious; however, all those wishing to object are advised to go hunt the tarrasque.

About the Books

The source texts for the information in this article are named and dated wherever possible. However, for every Pliny and Jaques de Voragine, there was an anonymous scribe whose work is known today as "Untitled MS Bodl.620."

These books were not works of fantasy. In his *Natural History*, Pliny made a genuine attempt to comprehensively record the natural world, the earliest person known to do so. According to some, due to his methodical arrangement of the information therein, the *Etymologies* of Saint Isidore represent the world's first encyclopedia (in 1999, the Vatican proclaimed Isidore patron saint of the Internet for the same reason). That the world contained witches, demons, and other mysterious things that killed people in appalling ways was presented as simple fact.

During the Middle Ages, many creatures gained symbolic meanings, locating them within God's grand scheme of things. For instance, the cockatrice represented the horror of sin as well as of sudden, inexplicable death. This was no more considered fantasy than Pliny's efforts, and the anonymous scribes duly recorded the information.

As the Middle Ages gave way to the Renaissance (around the 16th century), travel to the far reaches of the world became more common. These travelers studied the writings of their predecessors, such as Marco Polo (who also reported griffons and unicorns), and interpreted the creatures they encountered accordingly. Thus, early printed works such as Gesner's *History* contain all the familiar names, perhaps noting that the native inhabitants called such creatures "cokodils" or "orang-outangs." Even today, the diligent student of monster lore can find basilisks and salamanders if she accepts they no longer quite match their old descriptions.

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Tongue plucked raw from gaping maw
Blood from vein let fall like rain
Behold these eyes, your bloody prize
And now the fall from vaulted hall
These bones! This flesh! Consume it all!
Pazuzu! Pazuzu! Pazuzu!
—Sacrificial prayer to the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms

by James Jacobs • illustrattions by Andrew Hou and Jeff Carlisle

Demonomicon of Iggwilv:

Pazuzu

Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms

Of all the dark and dreadful demonic rulers of the Abyss, perhaps none pose as dire a threat to the Material Plane as Pazuzu. Whereas the other demon princes are embroiled in constant warfare (either with each other over rulership of Abyssal realms or with the infernal denizens of the Nine Hells in the endless Blood War), Pazuzu prefers to spend his time in the skies above these bloody, endless conflicts. While others are bound to their domains, as often as not prisoners of the very realms they claim to rule, unable to visit the Material Plane without first being summoned by powerful spellcasters, Pazuzu can (and often does) travel there on a whim. Pazuzu, more than any other demonic lord, takes a keen interest in the affairs of mortals, and takes as keen an interest in tempting them from what they know to be honest and true. In return for questionable gifts and doubtful rewards, Pazuzu seeks nothing less than the corruption of all that lives and breathes, one broken vow or shattered moral at a time.

Pazuzu, Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil)
Hit Dice: 38d8+380 (551 hp)
Initiative: +18
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 90 ft. (perfect), swim 60 ft.
Armor Class: 46 (+14 Dex, +14 natural, +8 insight), touch 32, flat-footed 32
Base Attack/Grapple: +38/+46
Attack: +41 melee (2d6+33/17–20, *+5 anarchic speed adamantine greatsword* with 10-point Power Attack)
Full Attack: +41/+41/+36/+31/+26 melee (2d6+33/17–20, *+5 anarchic speed adamantine greatsword* with 10-point Power Attack) and +31 melee (1d6+14, 2 talons with 10-point Power Attack) and +31 melee (1d8+14, bite with 10-point Power Attack)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Breath weapons, command avian, spell-like abilities, *summon avians*, *summon tanar'ri*, temptation

Special Qualities: Aura of servile avians, damage reduction 20/epic and lawful, darkvision 120 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, low-light vision, outsider traits, *planewalking*, regeneration 5, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, *see invisibility*, spell resistance 42, telepathy 200 ft.
Saves: Fort +31, Ref +35, Will +31
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 38, Con 31, Int 30, Wis 26, Cha 35
Skills: Balance +16, Bluff +53, Concentration +51, Diplomacy +57, Disguise +53, Forgery +51, Gather Information +53, Hide +55, Intimidate +55, Knowledge (arcana) +51, Knowledge (religion) +51, Knowledge (the planes) +51, Listen +49, Move Silently +55, Sense Motive +49, Spellcraft +53, Spot +49, Swim +16, Tumble +55, Use Magic Device +53
Feats: Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech*, Dodge, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack
Environment: Any air
Organization: Solitary, or Pazuzu plus 6 balor demons
Challenge Rating: 29
Treasure: Quadruple standard
Alignment: Chaotic evil
Advancement: —
*Dark Speech is a feat from the *Book of Vile Darkness*; if you don't have access to this book, replace this feat with Skill Focus (Bluff).

Although he is a tall, well-proportioned man, this figure's demonic features cannot be ignored. His powerful birdlike talons scrape the floor as he approaches, and four feathered wings shine with oil and smoke on his back. His head combines the features of a handsome man and a feral hawk, his cruel hooked beak filled with a forest of needlelike teeth.

Unlike many of the demon princes and lords of the Abyss, Pazuzu spends relatively little time in his own realm of Torremor, the 503rd layer of the Abyss. Rather, his unique ability amongst the Abyssal lords to move from plane to plane at will allows him to grace the skies throughout the multiverse with his unwelcomed taint. Pazuzu regards all of the skies above the 666 upper realms of the Abyss to be his domain, and no other demon lords have managed to successfully challenge this claim. Of course, Pazuzu rarely (if ever) tries to exert his influence in the skies over realms held by other demons or deities... at least, never in any obvious way. His favorite aerial realm is the sky above the first layer of the Abyss (which is sometimes called Pazunia in his honor); this layer is perhaps the most heavily traveled and contested of the Abyssal layers, and as such, Pazuzu derives endless enjoyment soaring the skies above while looking down with disdain and bemusement at the bickering and dealings of those below.

Pazuzu's symbol is a gnarled raptor's talon, often one bejeweled with rubies or glittering with gold. This talon is always shown clutching an eye of some sort, its claws just barely piercing the surface of the eye. Pazuzu sees all from his perch in the skies above.

Combat

Pazuzu avoids combat, preferring to send his six balor bodyguards into battle while he observes the battle from the sky above. Yet when forced into conflict, his tactics are devastating. Pazuzu prefers to fight with a serrated greatsword made from the wing feather of the massive anzu that guards his lair and transmuted into a razor-sharp adamantine blade. This weapon is a *+5 anarchic speed adamantine greatsword* that Pazuzu can retrieve from or dismiss into a non-dimensional space as a free action. When he fights, he typically does so by putting 10 points into Power Attack. He uses Combat Expertise only in those rare situations where someone seems able to hit his Armor Class with regularity. He can attack with his bite as a secondary attack, and as long as he's flying, he can also attack with his talons.

Breath Weapons (Su): Pazuzu has two types of breath weapon. The first can be used to create dangerous swarms of insects. He can use this breath weapon to create six swarms of locusts (all of which must be created so that each swarm is adjacent to at least one other swarm, and at least one square must be adjacent to Pazuzu). He may create these swarms so that they share the area of other creatures. The insects attack any creatures occupying the squares, and can pursue creatures that flee. If Pazuzu so chooses, he may instead create a single swarm of abyssal ants with his breath weapon. Pazuzu can create as many locust swarms as he wishes in a day, but may only create one abyssal ant swarm per day. Swarms created by his breath persist for 1 hour before dying.

Locust Swarm: hp 21; *Monster Manual* page 239.

Abyssal Ant Swarm: hp 150; see the Pazuzu's Minions sidebar on the next page.

Pazuzu's second breath weapon is a 70-foot cone of poisonous acidic vapor. All creatures caught in this area take 24d6 acid damage (DC 39 Reflex halves), and must also make a DC 39 Fortitude save or take 2d6 Strength damage from the poison. A minute later, a second DC 39 Fortitude save is required, this time to avoid the secondary damage of 2d6 Constitution damage. This breath weapon is persistent; it remains in place for 2 rounds. Any creatures that enter the area (or fail to leave the area before the second round) are exposed to both the acid damage and poison again.

Regardless of which breath weapon he uses, Pazuzu may only use this special attack once every 1d4 rounds.

Command Avian (Su): Once per round as a free action, Pazuzu can command any creature that has a natural fly speed to do his bidding. The targeted creature can resist the command with a successful DC 41 Will save. Good-aligned creatures gain a +10 resistance bonus on this save, but evil-aligned creatures suffer a –10 penalty on the save. Failure indicates that the creature becomes dominated (as the *dominate monster* spell) by Pazuzu for 1 round.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*astral projection*, *blasphemy* (DC 29), *call lightning storm* (DC 27), *control weather*, *deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect thoughts* (DC 24),

greater dispel magic, flesh to stone (DC 18), *statue, stinking cloud* (DC 15), *telekinesis* (DC 27), *greater teleport, tongues, unhallow, unholy aura* (DC 30), *unholy blight* (DC 16), *wind walk*; 2/day—*acid fog* (DC 28), *incendiary cloud* (DC 30), 1/day—*shapechange, symbol of death* (DC 30), *symbol of pain* (DC 27), *symbol of stunning* (DC 29), *wish*. Caster level 20th. The save DCs are Charisma based.

***Summon Avians* (Sp)**: Once per day Pazuzu can automatically summon 2d6 elder arrowhawks, 1d6 harpy archers, 1d6 fiendish rocs.

Elder arrowhawk: hp 112; *Monster Manual* page 19.

Harpy archer: hp 103; *Monster Manual* page 151.

Fiendish roc: hp 207; see the the Pazuzu's minions sidebar.

Advanced half-fiend griffon: hp 310; see the Pazuzu's minions sidebar.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)**: Once per day Pazuzu can automatically summon 2d4 succubi or 1d4+2 vrocks, or he has a 75% chance to summon 1d2 anzus or 1 balor.

Temptation (Su): Pazuzu takes great delight in tempting and corrupting mortals to chaos or evil. If a creature utters the name "Pazuzu" three times in succession, an unholy link between the speaker and Pazuzu is immediately established. For one minute, Pazuzu may use *detect good, detect law, detect thoughts,* and *tongues* to examine the speaker, despite any distance (physical or planar) that might separate the two. If he wishes, he can even use his *planewalking* ability to travel to the speaker's location. He always uses Sense Motive if necessary to determine if the one who calls him is trying to entrap him.

Once he answers such a summons (or at any time a creature he encounters begs the demon prince for aid), Pazuzu asks the mortal why he called upon the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms. Pazuzu almost always agrees to provide aid, but if he does, the caller's alignment shifts one step closer to chaotic. If the caller's alignment is already chaotic, it instead shifts one step closer to evil. These shifts in alignment are considered voluntary, and depending upon the character's class might have drastic effects on her abilities or status. Even if the aid doesn't cause an actual change to chaos or evil, allies of a person who calls upon Pazuzu almost always react to the act with anger and fear. Pazuzu never provides aid to chaotic evil creatures, and often punishes them for calling upon his aid rather than using the tools he has likely already granted the creature in question. He particularly enjoys providing aid to paladins, and takes pains to ensure that the first time he helps a paladin, no evil comes as a result of his assistance, hoping to encourage the paladin to call on him again. Aid granted by Pazuzu is typically granted in the manner easiest for the demon prince to manifest, often in the form of his *wish* spell-like ability.

If a creature calls upon Pazuzu too often, or if the creature calls upon the demon prince to save him from a doom brought about through incompetence, Pazuzu is more likely to punish the supplicant for his hubris or failure than he is to provide assistance. Sometimes Pazuzu sends his aspect to aid those who call upon him; the repercussions for gaining aid from a mere aspect are identical to those for receiving aid from the demon prince himself.

Aura of Servile Avians (Su): All evil-aligned creatures with a natural fly speed feel a strange bond of attraction

Pazuzu's Mininons

Abyssal Ant Swarm: CR 16; Medium aberration (extraplanar, swarm); HD 20d8+60; hp 150; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +15; Grp —; Atk or Full Atk swarm 4d6 plus 2d8 acid or +16 ranged touch (2d8, acid spit); Space/Reach 10 ft./0 ft.; SA acid, distraction (DC 23), penetration; SQ acid immunity, resistance to cold 10, electricity 10, and fire 10, darkvision 60 ft., hive mind, poison immunity, spell resistance 22, swarm traits; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +15; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +14, Listen 13, Spot +13.

Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Climb).

Acid (Ex): An abyssal ant swarm's acid spit functions as a grenadelike weapon, dealing 2d8 points of acid damage on a direct hit and 1d4 points of splash damage to creatures within 5 feet of the target. Creatures directly hit by the acid take an additional 1d8 points of damage one round after being hit. An abyssal ant swarm can take a standard action to spit and then a move action to move into a creature's area to deal swarm damage.

Penetration (Su): The swarm attack of an abyssal ant swarm penetrates damage reduction as if it were a magic weapon.

Hive Mind (Ex): An abyssal ant swarm has a hive mind, which makes it susceptible to mind-affecting spells. For purposes of such spells, the swarm is a single creature of the aberration type.

Fiendish roc: CR 11; Gargantuan magical beast; HD 18d8+126; hp 207; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +13; Grp +37; Atk +22 melee (2d6+12, talon); Full Atk +22 melee (2d6+12, 2 talons) and +19 melee (2d8+6, bite); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.; SA smite good 1/day (+18 damage); SQ darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 10/magic, low-light vision, resistance to cold 10 and fire 10, spell resistance +23; AL CE; SV Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +9; Str 34, Dex 15, Con 24, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills: Hide –3, Listen +10, Spot +14.

Feats: Alertness, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover.

and servitude to Pazuzu. Before such a creature takes any hostile action against Pazuzu, it must succeed at a DC 41 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature's attack fails and its action is wasted. This aura extends to a radius of 120 feet. The saving throw is Charisma-based.

***Planewalking* (Sp)**: Pazuzu may move between planes at will. It takes a full-round action for him to activate this spell-like ability, which duplicates the effects of *plane shift* save that Pazuzu arrives at precisely the location he desires if he's physically been to the destination before. If he has never been to the location, he arrives within 5–500 miles of the location. He may transport up to one additional willing creature of any size with him. If he uses this ability to answer the call of one of his flock, Pazuzu can *plane shift* with complete accuracy even if he hasn't physically been to the destination. This spell-like ability functions at caster level 20 and is the equivalent of an 8th-level spell.

Regeneration (Ex): Damage from fire and lawful or good-aligned attacks deal normal damage to Pazuzu. If Pazuzu loses a body part, the missing part regenerates fully in one round unless his ability to regenerate is suppressed for that round. This allows him to recover from normally lethal attacks (such as the beheading effect of a *vorpal sword*) after one round.

Pazuzu's Aspect

Although Pazuzu can use his *planewalking* spell-like ability to travel anywhere in the multiverse, he often doesn't have the time or interest to handle all of his affairs personally. In these cases, he entrusts the work to an aspect, a physical embodiment of a small portion of his life force. Pazuzu's aspect looks identical to his true form, although its presence is much less overwhelming. Sometimes, his faithful can use spells like *planar ally* or *planar binding* to call upon Pazuzu's aspect. The stats presented here are representative of the least of Pazuzu's aspects (his aspect as a violent warrior); other, more powerful incarnations of his aspect certainly exist. For more general information on aspects, consult pages 46 and 47 of the *Miniatures Handbook*.

Aspect of Pazuzu: CR 9; Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri); HD 10d8+60; hp 105; Init +10; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect); AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (2d6+6, *+3 unholy greatsword*); Full Atk +15/+10 (2d6+6, *+3 unholy greatsword*) and +7 melee (1d4+1, 2 talons); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, *see invisibility*, telepathy 100 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +13, Will +12; Str 15, Dex 23, Con 23, Int 19, Wis 20, Cha 22.

Skills: Bluff +22, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +21, Disguise +19 (+21 acting), Forgery +17, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +18, Sense Motive +18, Spot +18.

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once per day, damage 10d6 acid, Reflex DC 21 half. The save is Constitution-based.

Possessions: *+3 unholy greatsword*.

Pazuzu's Goals

The Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms is an enigma amongst the Abyssal powers, for he alone of their scheming ranks seems content to let the other demonic rulers go about their business. While the other demon lords regard Pazuzu with suspicion at best, few take the time to oppose his actions, for they are concerned with more antagonistic enemies. This is as Pazuzu wishes, for he views all of the skies above the tortured Abyssal layers to be his own, and to date, no demon lord of significant power has seen fit to challenge his claim. Whether or not this is due to fear or due to a perception that the skies above are empty and without value is unclear.

Only a few demon lords actively oppose Pazuzu. The most infamous is Graz'zt, who, in his desire to someday rule the entire Abyss, finds Pazuzu's claim over its skies to be both preposterous and insulting. Their enmity has spilled over into countless worlds, and battles between their forces have left scars both on Abyssal layers and beyond. Another of Pazuzu's enemies is the much more obscure Lamashtu, known also as "She Who Erases." Well known for her insatiable hunger for the blood and bones of pregnant mothers and newborn babies, Lamashtu was the demon queen of monstrous birth and deformity. Ancient texts maintain that Lamashtu was once Pazuzu's consort until she betrayed him and he maimed her by eating her eyes and banishing her to an unknown layer of the Abyss. These texts hold that Lamashtu is the only being who knows Pazuzu's true name, and that her abuse of this knowledge is what drove Pazuzu to mutilate her.

Pazuzu is not without ambitions. His desires are innocence, purity, and honesty. To him, these are sweet nectars and intoxicating liquors fine enough to harvest personally. Pazuzu seeks out the noble paladin, the laughing child, and the toiling honest peasant. They are his vineyard. He takes from them what makes them strong, and what he excretes back into their hollow shells is bitter, cruel, and wicked. The very act of corruption of the spirt and the slaughter of virtue is Pazuzu's finest addiction, and he has had eons to perfect the methods of his cultivation. Often, the temptations he offers mortals spread out over generations, and he watches silently from above as families slowly succumb. What might have seemed an idle evil to a hard-working cobbler is the seed, and his children and grandchildren are the fertile soil in which Pazuzu's wickedness grows. Trace the genealogy of the brutal despot, the sadistic general, or the remorseless killer back far enough and chances are one can pinpoint the genesis of his family's spiral into depravity: A genesis borne of nighted wings and poison promises to a desperate fool. When these seeds wither and die (as all things that consume themselves must in the end), Pazuzu appears one last time to his hateful students and plucks from them their eyes, so the last thing they see is the true cruelty of their beloved patron's evil. It is said that those whose eyes Pazuzu feeds

upon do not move on to a better world in death. Rather, they become hollow spirits bound to Pazuzu's lusts, cursed forever to watch from behind his cold black eyes as he feeds and feeds again on what they once held so dear.

These desires and needs alone explain Pazuzu's apparent disinterest in lordship over Abyssal realms, for what Pazuzu lusts for most is what does not exist. Honesty and innocence are transient visitors to this region, and if they stay for long they are overwhelmed. One might assume that his hungers would draw him to realms like the Seven Heavens, yet such planes are too pure for his palate. He cannot digest what cannot be consumed. No, what tempts Pazuzu's hunger more than lordship over an endless nightmare realm of voracious fiends and rutting demons, more than a shining realm of absolute purity and endless truth, is nothing less than lordship over the Material Plane. This realm, more than any other, is a breeding ground for what he seeks above all else. Here, no one is indomitable, and no one is as cruel as they can potentially be. Everyone, from the kindest peasant to the most hateful king can fall further, and thus nourish Pazuzu's savage hunger.

For some time now, Pazuzu has tested his presence on the Material Plane, seeing how far he can go before its denizens rise up against him in horror. What he has found has fascinated him. When first he turned his eye to the Material Plane, he found that it took relatively little of his tampering to raise a mob or alert a church. Yet as the centuries wore on, certain regions in which he has focused his works have grown accustomed to his influence. Where once the possession of a child brought the angry retribution of an entire church, now the corruption of an entire village barely seems to cause a stir. It seems almost as if society itself has grown used to his temptations, accepted his lurking presence. In many worlds, rulers of nations pay homage to the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms now, if not in word then by deed. Nothing could further satisfy Pazuzu, for now he prepares to take these kingdoms, nations, and worlds under his oily wing.

Pazuzu's Cult

Pazuzu's cults generally follow the same path from creation to destruction. Unlike most demon princes, Pazuzu usually takes an active role in a cult's early formation. Each Pazuzu cult starts with the same seed, a desperate plea for aid by someone who has learned Pazuzu's name (possibly through an ancient text or a DC 30 Knowledge [the planes] skill check). Often, these pleas are born of true and honest need: a sickly farmer in need of a good harvest or a desperate warrior faced with insurmountable odds in the defense of his homeland. These people aren't evil. Their greatest sin is perhaps foolishness. When they call upon Pazuzu, he usually grants their desires without attempting to pervert the results or twist the meaning of the request; he honors the spirit of the request, not its letter. His methods are far more insidious. He only asks that his name not be repeated to others, assuring the mortal that his gifts are for him and him alone. Many of his cultists don't know his identity, while others worship him under similar names, like Pazrael or Ghlaunder.

The desperate mortal's sudden turn of luck always manifests in some way that makes it obvious that more than mere skill and hard work are responsible. Pazuzu knows that where there's one desperate soul, there are often more, and more often than not those other desperate souls see the miraculous results of one man's request. Invariably, they ask questions, and invariably, word spreads. Before long, the original mortal realizes that he wants more of Pazuzu's power, and when he calls upon him again the results are a little more twisted, a little more dark. Before long, the mortal has become a minion, and his neighbors, friends, and family have flocked to his side. The cult has formed.

As the cult grows, Pazuzu's gifts grow more and more dark and sinister. He allows his minion to teach his name to key, trusted cultists, and begins to grant them their own desires, often giving them enough to usurp command of the cult if the previous leader has displeased him. Eventually, when Pazuzu judges his cultists have come to depend on him for success rather than on themselves, he reveals himself in his true might and horror. Those cultists who try to repent or flee he commands the faithful to capture and bind. Pazuzu then demands sacrifice. After the heretics have had their tongues and eyes plucked out and their back and torsos deeply lacerated by severed vulture talons, their blind, bleeding, and mute bodies are taken to the nearest precipice or well and thrown into it, their final fall and life-quenching impact below signifying their being cast out of the firmament and onto the putrid husk of the land below.

Once a cult has committed its first sacrifices, Pazuzu leaves it to its own devices, seeking new prospects elsewhere. He rarely (if ever) answers that cult's pleas again. Pazuzu cultists understand that once they have been accepted into the Lower Aerial Kingdoms, they are expected to serve Pazuzu, not to be served. Out of a warped sense of loyalty and commitment most of these cultists spend the rest of their lives striving to please their master, converting new members and sacrificing their enemies until finally, inevitably, they are sought out and destroyed by the forces of law and good. Pazuzu never mourns the loss of a cult in this manner, for often these righteous crusaders loot the bodies of his fallen cultists or rob his temples of their treasures. When they do, they learn his name.

Thrall of Pazuzu

Thralls of Pazuzu are dangerous foes, not only in combat but in diplomatic situations. They live to spread the word of their dark patron, tempting others to ask for his aid and in so doing spread chaos and evil like a blight. When they cannot tempt others into serving their master's will they call upon his favored minions—all creatures that fly or swarm—to aid in their unholy crusade. A thrall of Pazuzu views creatures that cannot fly as pitiful and foolish, and often uses the seduction

Pazuzu in Real World Myth

Like many of the Archdevils and Demon Lords that appear in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, Pazuzu has real world mythology in his genesis. In ancient Assyria and Babylonia, he was viewed as a grotesque demon—a king of evil wind demons. Surviving statuettes depict him as a monstrous humanoid with a lion's face, four wings, the talons of a bird or lion, and a snake-headed phallus. Yet despite this, Pazuzu was viewed as a force against pestilence and troubled childbirths, and he often played an almost benevolent role in protecting against such disasters. Of course, other sources indicate that he was responsible for plagues and famine and pestilence; this more sinister aspect certainly fits his role in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

Yet despite his ancient roots, Pazuzu's actually made his presence known relatively recently (in archeological terms). In the movie *The Exorcist*, the demon that Father Merrin confronts in Iraq and later again in Georgetown (where it has possessed a young girl) is none other than Pazuzu himself.

of flight as a promise to those who would call upon Pazuzu for aid.

Sorcerers, bards, and clerics all make excellent thralls of Pazuzu, as they often have fairly high Charisma scores, diplomatic skills, or spells that can influence the minds of others. Those who can't fly on their own and can't meet the ability to cast spells to gain this ability typically call on Pazuzu to gain some form of flight, often by using a *wish* granted by the demon prince.

Thralls of Pazuzu rarely work together with other thralls, preferring to lead small, secretive lives in cities or locations where one would not expect demonic influence. They often seek to create new cults dedicated to Pazuzu, usually deceiving the members into believing they are venerating some other (usually fictional) god. Cult members who wish to advance to the highest levels of these cults find that they must call upon the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms several times before they are accepted.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Thralls of Pazuzu are proficient with no weapons, armor, or shields.

Bonus Feat or Spells: When a thrall of Pazuzu attains 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 10th level, she gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in whatever spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class, or else she gains a bonus feat of her choice. If the thrall chooses +1 spellcasting level, she does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained except for an increased effective level of spellcasting.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a thrall of Pazuzu, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Skills: Bluff 9 ranks, Diplomacy 9 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks.

Feats: Persuasive, Thrall to Demon*.

Special: Must be able to fly naturally, or must be able to cast at least 2 different spells that grant flight or the ability to move upward through the air; *feather fall* would not qualify, but *levitate* and *air walk* would. Similarly, spells like *alter self* or *polymorph* fulfill one of the spell requirements, as does the wildshape ability.

Special: Must have convinced another creature to call upon Pazuzu's aid without having resorted to magic.

*Thrall to Demon is a feat from the *Book of Vile Darkness;* if you don't have acecess to this book, replace this feat with Iron Will.

This essentially means that she adds the new level to the level of whatever other spellcasting class she has, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

If the character had more than one spellcasting class before she became a thrall of Pazuzu, she must decide to which class she adds the level for purposes of determining spells per day.

A thrall of Pazuzu is free to choose the bonus feat at one opportunity and the spellcasting level the next time the decision arises, or vice versa. Characters who are not spellcasters must choose the bonus feat.

Temptation (Ex): The thrall of Pazuzu is a master of temptation. She gains a +2 profane bonus on any Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks made to attempt to convince a creature to perform an action against its nature. Additionally, when a thrall of Pazuzu casts a spell or uses a spell-like ability from the school of Enchantment, she adds +1 to the DC to resist the spell's effects and +2 on any rolls made to penetrate spell resistance.

Breath of Pazuzu I (Su): Once per day, the thrall of Pazuzu may exhale a single locust swarm (*Monster Manual* 239) from her mouth as a standard action. The locust swarm persists for a number of rounds equal to the thrall's class level plus her Charisma modifier, or until it is slain. At least one square of the swarm's space must be adjacent to the thrall's space. The thrall can create the swarm so it occupies the space of creatures (including herself). This swarm never distracts, damages, or otherwise harms the thrall who created it.

Flight (Ex): The thrall of Pazuzu grows a single pair of black raven wings at 2nd level, gaining a fly speed of 20 feet (average). If the thrall already has a fly speed, her fly speed increases by +20 feet and her wings (if she has any) change to look like black raven wings.

***Speak with Avian* (Sp)**: A thrall of Pazuzu can communicate with any creature that has a natural fly speed as if with the *tongues* spell.

Swarmform (Su): At 3rd level, a thrall of Pazuzu can assume the form of a locust swarm as a standard action. This ability functions similarly to a druid's wild shape ability, save that only one form can be assumed, and the thrall of Pazuzu can maintain the swarmform for only 1 minute per thrall of Pazuzu level.

***Charm Avian* (Sp)**: At 4th level, a thrall of Pazuzu may use *charm monster* as a spell-like ability. Although she can use this ability a number of times per day equal to half her thrall of Pazuzu level, she can only target creatures with a natural fly speed with this ability.

Breath of Pazuzu II (Su): At 5th level, the thrall of Pazuzu may use her breath of Pazuzu ability twice per day, and each time she does so she creates two locust swarms.

Swarm Mastery (Su): At 7th level, the thrall of Pazuzu forms an unholy bond with creatures of the swarm subtype. She

Class Skils

The thrall of Pazuzu's class skill's (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

The Thrall of Pazuzu

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Temptation, breath of Pazuzu I	—
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Flight, *speak with avian*	—
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Swarmform 1/day	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	*Charm avian*	—
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Breath of Pazuzu II	—
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Swarmform 2/day	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Swarm mastery	—
8	+6	+2	+6	+2	*Dominate avian*	—
9	+6	+3	+6	+3	Swarmform 3/day	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class
10	+7	+3	+7	+3	Improved flight, breath of Pazuzu III	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class

never becomes distracted by swarms and never takes damage from swarms. Further, any swarms she summons or conjures gain the fiendish creature template.

***Dominate Avian* (Sp)**: At 8th level, the thrall of Pazuzu can replace two daily uses of her *charm avian* spell-like ability with *dominate avian*. This functions as *dominate monster*, yet can only be used to target creatures with a natural fly speed.

Improved Flight (Ex): At 10th level, the thrall of Pazuzu's fly speed increases by +30 feet, and her maneuverability rating improves to perfect. While flying, she gains a +4 insight bonus on initiative checks.

Breath of Pazuzu III (Su): At 10th level, the thrall of Pazuzu may use her breath of Pazuzu ability three times per day, and each time she does so she creates three locust swarms. Alternatively, she can substitute a 30-foot cone of acidic gas for the locust swarm effect. This cone of gas inflicts 10d6 points of acid damage to all those caught in its area. A successful Reflex save (DC 20 + the thrall of Pazuzu's Constitution modifier) halves the damage.

Pazuzu's Minions

Pazuzu's corrupted cultists might be his most common servitors, but he often works through the actions of other creatures as well. Although he can directly command most avians, he favors harpies, fiendish rocs, and half-fiend griffons. For lesser tasks, he sometimes sends fiendish or half-fiend 3-HD eagles. For more dangerous tasks, he favors demons as generals for his armies or advisors to favored cultists. Vrocks are perhaps his favorite, especially those with levels in bard or rogue. He often uses chasme (from the *Book of Vile Darkness*) when he needs assassins, and when he simply wants to wreak havoc on a large scale he calls upon swarms of abyssal ants or clouds of locusts. Of all his favored minions, though, none are as closely tied to his servitude as the dreaded anzu demons. These monstrous birdlike terrors are fairly rare even in the Abyss, and their presence almost always signifies Pazuzu's special interest in the region. They sometimes serve as mounts for his generals, but more often he sends them to seek out potent magic items to add to his collection. Finally, Pazuzu is often followed by a group of six fanatically loyal balor demons, each a level 13 rogue, that serve him as bodyguards.

Pazuzu's cults are commonly made up of humanoids, most often humans, since they typically form the most numerous and powerful societies on the Material Plane. He generally has no interest in the various savage humanoids like goblins, orcs, and kobolds, for he finds their manners too coarse and takes no pleasure in corrupting societies that are already filled with evil and debauchery. The major exception to this are the kenku, birdlike humanoids detailed on pages 86–87 of the *Monster Manual III*. His kenku cults are terrible, vile collections of murderous knaves and sneaks who hope to someday regain the ability to fly as a reward for serving the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms. One such kenku cult is detailed in

"Forsaken Arch," an adventure featured in issue #120 of *Dungeon*. See also the "Ecology of the Kenku" on page 68 of this issue.

Anzu

Huge Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri)
Hit Dice: 16d8+128 (200 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 80 ft. (good)
Armor Class: 28 (–2 size, +5 Dex, +15 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 23
Base Attack/Grapple: +16/+33
Attack: +23 melee (3d6+8/15–20/×3 plus poison, bite)
Full Attack: +23 melee (3d6+8/15–20/×3 plus poison, bite) and +21 melee (1d8+4, 4 wings) and +21 melee (1d8+4, 2 talons)
Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Augmented critical, poison breath, spell-like abilities, *summon tanar'ri*
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/good and cold iron, darkvision 60 ft., immune to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, see invisible, slick, spell resistance 24, telekinetic mastery, telepathy 100 ft.
Saves: Fort +18, Ref +15, Will +15
Abilities: Str 28, Dex 21, Con 26, Int 15, Wis 20, Cha 23
Skills: Balance +7, Bluff +25, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +8, Hide +16, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Listen +24, Move Silently +24, Sense Motive +24, Spot +24, Tumble +24, Use Magic Device +25
Feats: Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Trip, Multiattack
Environment: The Abyss
Organization: Solitary, pair, or murder (3–10)
Challenge Rating: 15
Treasure: Standard coins; standard goods; double items
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 17–25 HD (Huge), 26–40 HD (Gargantuan), 41–48 HD (Colossal)
Level Adjustment: —

This monstrous birdlike creature is the size of a bull elephant. Its body is that of a powerful four-winged eagle, its feathers greasy and dripping with black oil. The creature's wing feathers seem particularly

If you don't kill the MEAT GOLEM, you can't take on the black pudding! HOW can you take on the BLACK PUDDING if you don't KILL THE MEAT?

Dork Tower
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rigid and look almost razor-sharp along the outer edges. Its legs are powerfully muscled and end in large orange talons. The monster's head is perhaps the most horrifying, for despite the fact that it is feathered, its visage is nonetheless that of a hateful lion with a long snout and a formidable set of teeth. Its very breath is visible, seething from between its froth-speckled lips and teeth in thick green coils.

The dreaded anzu rank among the greatest terrors of the Abyssal skies and are particularly favored by Pazuzu and his flock. They soar through the tainted skies, constantly seeking powerful magic items to steal. They either hoard these items in their gruesome bone and offal nests, high in Abyssal mountains or treetops, or they wear and wield them with their telekinetic powers.

Although they are intelligent, anzu are often willing to serve as mounts for demons and particularly powerful mortals, as long as they are well-rewarded with magic items for their servitude.

Anzu rarely grow larger than 48 Hit Dice, but a particularly massive and deadly anzu with 50 Hit Dice is said to guard Pazuzu's lair on the 503rd layer of the Abyss.

An anzu is 25 feet long with a 60-foot wingspan. It weighs four tons.

Combat

An anzu only rarely attacks an enemy upon sight. Usually, it uses its spell-like abilities to remain silent and hidden so it can observe its prey for several hours, studying strengths and weaknesses and determining who in its targeted group has the most magic items. When the demon attacks, it seeks to incapacitate or kill those with the most magic items first. If hard pressed, it grabs up fallen bodies and attempts to flee with them.

Augmented Critical (Ex): The anzu's bite is particularly harrowing, and threatens a critical hit on an 18 or higher (an anzu takes the Improved Critical feat to further increase its threat range with its bite). An anzu's bite inflicts triple damage on a successful critical hit.

Poison Breath (Su): An anzu's breath is poisonous, and causes insanity and hallucinations to those who succumb to it. Any creature bitten by an anzu is exposed to this terrible toxin and must make a DC 26 Fortitude save or suffer 2d4 points of initial and secondary Wisdom damage. If an anzu doesn't move from its current location for at least one round, its breath taints the area around it to a radius of 5 feet. All creatures in this area must make a DC 26 Fortitude save each round (but with a +4 bonus on the save) to avoid taking Wisdom damage. If the anzu moves, the air in the area it occupied remains poisoned for 1 round.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): At will—*analyze dweomer*, *displacement*, *greater invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 21), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy aura* (DC 24), *unholy blight* (DC 20); 1/day—*greater magic fang*, *project image*, *true seeing*. Caster level 16th. Save DCs are Charisma based.

***Summon Tanar'ri* (Sp)**: Once per day an anzu can attempt to summon 1d6 vrocks or one other anzu with a 60% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

See Invisible (Ex): An anzu can see invisible creatures as if under the effects of a *see invisibility* spell.

Slick (Su): An anzu's feathers are coated with vile-smelling black oil. This oil grants the anzu a *freedom of movement* effect that can only be removed by exposure to fire. If an anzu fails a Reflex save against a fire-based attack, it loses the benefits of this special quality for one hour.

Telekinetic Mastery (Su): The anzu is particularly skilled at using its *telekinesis* spell-like ability. It doesn't need to concentrate to keep the sustained force effect of this spell in effect, and the duration is permanent until the anzu elects to dismiss the effect. It may have up to two different objects under the effects of sustained force *telekinesis* at once, and can cast spells or use spell-like abilities while maintaining both effects. In this manner, an anzu can "carry" two magic items like wands or other use-activated items. Items carried this way are considered to be attended objects if they need to make saving throws. The anzu may still use *telekinesis* to perform combat maneuvers or violent thrusts with its *telekinesis* ability and gains a +4 racial bonus on any rolls made to determine the outcome of such effects, but the durations and concentration requirements for these telekinetic manifestations function as per the spell.

Pazuzu's Realm

Despite his disinterest in fiendish politics and his ability to move between the planes on a whim, Pazuzu understands the value of having a stronghold. Many times in the past his lusts have found him confronting an enemy of great power, often a servant of law or good, but just as often a greedy demon lord comes sniffing for something to steal. While Pazuzu has yet to meet a foe in combat who can do him permanent harm, he is far too wise to think himself indestructible. At the same time, his ravishings upon the Material Plane have left him with wonders and material rewards to make the most powerful dragon whimper jealously. It's good to have a place to keep your winnings, to display your conquests, and to entertain your guests, even if you only invited them so you might taste of their eyes.

Although he claims (and is mostly uncontested) rulership of the skies of the Abyss, what few know is that Pazuzu also keeps a lair deep on that plane. This is the realm of Torremor on the 503rd layer of the Abyss. Pazuzu's attitude toward his realm is best described as jealous neglect; he often loathes spending time in Torremor, yet is quick to come to its defense at even the slightest rumbling that another demon lord might be hatching plans against it.

Torremor is a tangled nest of beams and perches, rooks and pinnacles, bridges and arches, connected by writhing ropes and jangling chains. Some regions are fitted with small structures with stairs and ladders—places for guests and prisoners to stay. That the massive structure is solid is without doubt; creatures can walk along its surfaces with ease, and those knocked from its perches fall to their eventual deaths below, broken and shattered on bridges and pinnacles lower still. Offal and waterfalls frothing from larger, more

solid sections of the realm tumble forever, crumbling to dust or drifting away in vapor long before they finish their plunge.

Torremor has no true base, yet it seems to have countless apexes. The countless spires of the massive structure dominate the horizon in every direction. Some of these spires are little more than skeletal frameworks haunted by anzu, chasmes, and vrocks, while others are almost fortresses on their own. These might be the lairs of favored minions, jails for Pazuzu's most hated enemies, temples to his aerial majesty, or anything else. One of the most important of these spires is Onstrakker's Nest, a constantly growing and crumbling sphere of timber, bones, earthbergs, and pillars hundreds of miles in diameter and impaled on a gleaming spire of sweaty blue metal. This massive nest swarms with all manner of flying demons, although chasmes and vrocks are the most commonly seen. These demons scavenge loose objects from elsewhere in Torremor, using the raw materials to expand the nest, yet even as they do so, portions crumble and fall away into the infinite void below. It is said that the fiend that lurks at the nest's center is the brood queen of all that flies and flops through the Abyssal Skies and thus the source of all vrocks and chasme in the Abyss.. Rumors also hold that the nest was once Pazuzu's bridal chateau, but now a tremendous prison built to contain the forgotten demon queen Lamashtu, who once held Pazuzu's favor. Pazuzu himself never speaks of Onstrakker's Nest, nor can any on Torremor recall him having ever paid a visit there, yet the fact that he allows the demons to slowly tear apart his fortress realm to build it speaks volumes for the importance it holds to him.

The most important location in Torremor is the Lord's Rook, a massive but simple structure atop the realm's highest spire. It is here that Pazuzu dwells when he visits his realm. Few claim to have actually beheld this magnificent open-walled cathedral, built to accommodate those who can fly and to mock those who cannot. It is whispered that something hidden in the core of the Lord's Rook grants Pazuzu his unique ability to *plane shift* at will, rumors that have more than anything else fueled Graz'zt's jealousy and hatred of the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms. When Pazuzu is not in Torremor, the Lord's Rook is guarded by an anzu demon of epic proportions, said to be the same beast from which Pazuzu plucked the feather to create his sword. It is here that Pazuzu created his throne, a powerful artifact known as the *Blinding Claw*. He sometimes brings his throne with him as a perch to roost upon while he observes other realms, but when he is not using it the artifact can be found here, guarded by the primal anzu.

The Blinding Claw (Major Artifact)

The *Blinding Claw* is Pazuzu's symbol of rulership, a mighty artifact consisting of a roc's talon that has been embossed with gold and studded with rubies the size of vulture's eggs. The *Blinding Claw* remains "fixed" in space, hanging unsupported in the air in a fashion similar to that of an *immovable rod*. The *Blinding Claw* can support 10 tons of weight before falling to the ground. If a creature pushes against the *Blinding Claw*, it must make a DC 45 Strength check to move the Claw up to 10 feet in a single round.

As long as Pazuzu lives, no other can command any of the *Blinding Claw's* powers without resorting to the Use Magic Device skill to deceive the *Blinding Claw* that the user is in fact the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms. This requires a DC 40 Use Magic Device check; failure indicates the *Claw* telepathically alerts Pazuzu to the intrusion, and the victim must make an immediate DC 25 Fortitude save to resist being transformed into a vrock demon. All character levels are lost with this transformation, as are the victim's memories and personality. He forevermore behaves as a vrock. A *miracle* or *wish* can reverse this effect, as can a successful *break enchantment* cast against a 29th-level effect.

As a full-round action, Pazuzu (or the *Claw's* current owner if Pazuzu is slain) can call the *Claw* to his side, transporting the artifact to his current location as if by a *gate* spell. Pazuzu often uses the *Blinding Claw* as a perch on which he may rest and look down upon the realms below.

The *Blinding Claw* can be used to cast the following spells at will, one at a time: enlarged *blindness* heightened to a 9th-level spell (DC 23), *clairvoyance*, *prying eyes*, and *true seeing*. Once per day, the *Blinding Claw* can be used to cast *blasphemy*, *meteor swarm*, and *reverse gravity*. The artifact may have other secret powers known only to Pazuzu.

CL 29th; Weight 900 lb.

by Eric Cagle • illustrated by Peter Bergtig

THE ECOLOGY OF THE KENKU

In the dark places of many cities, hidden by the refuse of those who walk the streets by day, stretch ominous markings, scores in the stone left by the unseen passage of powerful talons. Although dark figures lurk within the alleys of any city, in some skulk deadlier avian intruders. These interlopers are kenkus, a vagrant people akin to crows and other filthy avian scavengers. Hidden by shadows and tattered rags, they plot in larcenous flocks, taking what they please and preying off their unsuspecting neighbors. Without homes of their own, these greedy, cruel beings scheme against their enemies from within, thieving and murdering for even the most trifling copper. Yet, beneath the guise of murderous vagabonds kenkus hide far darker secrets and ties to powers both ancient and foul.

History of Kenkus

Secretive and reclusive, kenkus reveal little about their true origins—if indeed their scattered communities even know them. Scholars who delve into their history find that for centuries kenkus have existed as a ubiquitous part of most large urban areas—the largest cities always having aeries of kenku lurking in the darkest parts of town.

What few details the eldest and most learned kenkus let slip to outsiders indicate that their race came into existence as the result of tragedy piled upon tragedy. Long ago, kenkus existed as a race of large, intelligent ravens that lived in the shadows of other races. During a time of strife, a great plague spread among their hosts. In desperation, these proto-kenku resorted to theft and blatant raids, and in doing so spread their disease among the neighboring peoples. Infuriated, many races took up hunting these sentient birds and destroying their mountainous nests—almost universally aided by giant eagles, who bore a long-standing rivalry with the massive ravens. Driven nearly to extinction through assaults on their homes, the ravens' various aeries came together into a single massive flock. Their numbers blackening the sky, they squawked and cried out to something, anything, to save them from their unrelenting enemies and seemingly incurable disease.

The answer came in the form of an enormous raven, its unnaturally white feathers soaked and stained red with gore. Descending from the moonless sky and speaking in all the languages of the world, this raven agreed to grant the petitioners their wish; but at a price. In that single night, the ravens' plague was miraculously cured and all giant eagles and their eggs within 100 miles were laid to bloody ruin—a nightmare that race vengefully remembers to this day. In exchange, the cruel birds agreed to call one lord, Pazuzu, their true master and spread his name among the creatures of the world.

Yet even in those times, the creatures that would be kenkus were a fickle, deceitful lot. Their proselytizing in honor of the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdom proved to be short lived as their attentions were drawn to the treasures of those to whom they preached. Within a generation the ravens grew bored with their piety, some even turning to the worship of humanoid deities promising greater wealth and power. Enraged, the demon prince Pazuzu returned, slaughtering many of the ravens and cursing the survivors with an affliction far greater than that which he removed. From that day on, the giant ravens' fledglings hatched without wings, instead possessing scaly arms and legs, forever exiled from the skies for their betrayal. Thus, kenkus were born.

KNOWLEDGE OF KENKUS

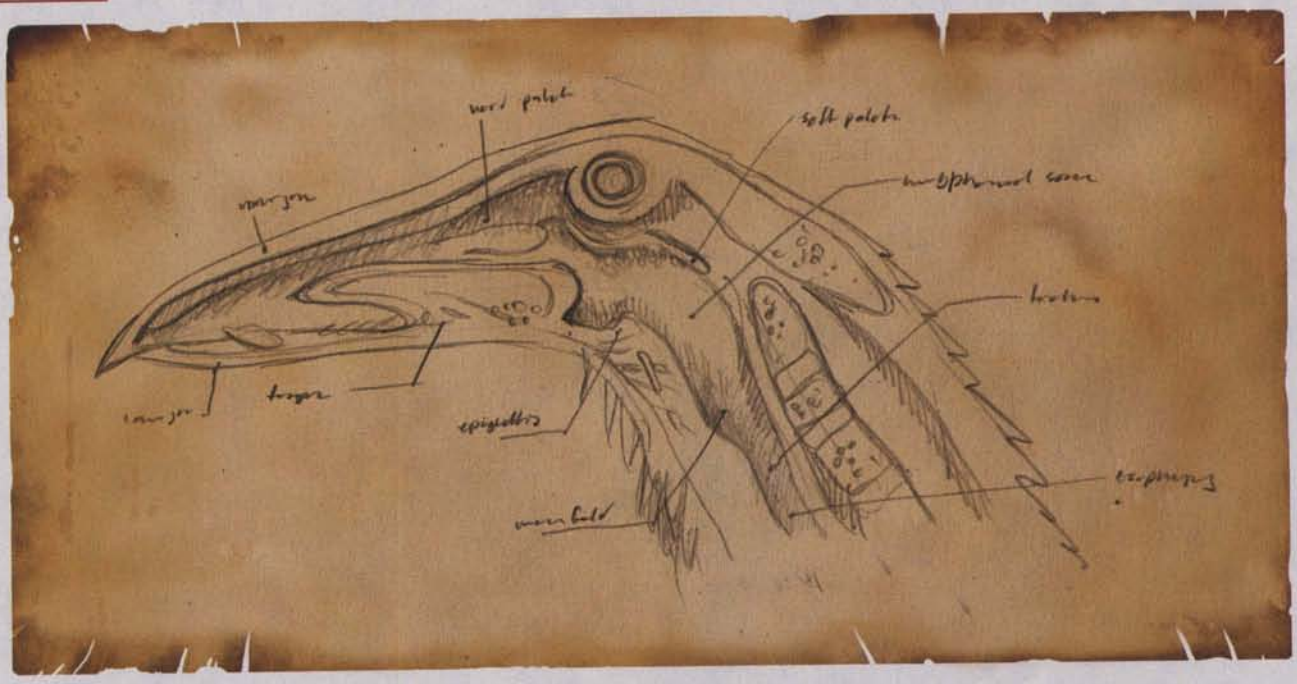
The following table shows the results of Knowledge (history) checks related to kenkus. Those who inhabit large cities most often learn this information, commonly from victims of the insidious plots of these avian humanoids.

Knowledge (history)

DC	Result
10	Kenkus are birdike humanoids who skulk in the back alleys and abandoned areas of most major cities.
15	Kenkus are extremely greedy, vicious beings, but work closely with each other. They prove deadly in groups, but are often cowardly if caught alone. It's extremely difficult to force a kenku to turn against its kin.
20	Kenkus can mimic almost any sound they hear and use this ability to sow lies and mistrust among their enemies. Their aeries are most commonly found at heights of tall abandoned buildings or within sewers.
25	Kenkus are consummate assassins, often hired by other races to do their dirty work. Being that they fill a similar niche in a city's underworld, kenkus and thieves guilds often fight ongoing criminal wars for territory.

Physiology of Kenkus

Although humanoid, kenkus clearly come from avian stock and retain many features common to birds. Kenkus average 5 feet in height, but because of their partially hollow bones, commonly weigh a mere 75 pounds. Their heads are the most distinctive part of their bodies—resembling those of oversized ravens or crows—complete with large, inquisitive black eyes and short beaks. Lacking wings, kenkus possess scrawny arms that end in powerful claws and legs supported by taloned feet. (As a result, kenkus are unable to don normal shoes or other footwear, magical or otherwise, unless such items were created to fit taloned wearers.) Born from large eggs, young kenkus naturally have soft, dark feathers, typically a



shiny black in color, which cover their heads and torsos, although variations do occur in certain individuals. As kenkus age, their feathers—beginning on their heads and slowly extending to the rest of their bodies—turn a pure, ivory white. These aging creatures typically retain their intellect and cunning until the moment of their death, becoming true masterminds and pulling the strings of entire aeries from afar. Despite their kin's superficial loyalty, however, the competitive nature of kenkus requires elders to maintain a constant vigil as there is always a potential rival or ambitious child plotting to take over.

Kenkus are omnivores perfectly adapted to eating the abundant scraps found on and under city streets. They enjoy carrion intermixed with the occasional bit of rotting vegetable or fruit.

Although they possess beaks like birds, the throat and tongue of kenkus resemble elongated humanoid structures, granting them the ability to mimic almost any sound, voice, and even accent that they overhear. Kenkus might not understand the meaning of the words they mimic, but they do so with astounding accuracy. They typically use this ability to guide unsuspecting victims into ambushes, frequently by tempting victims with the voices of allies or threatening them with monstrous growls. Kenkus speak flawless Common, but possess their own language filled with squawks, caws, and other sounds similar to crows and ravens. An angry or excited kenku sometimes slips, interspersing these sounds with the Common tongue.

Light does not harm kenkus, but they commonly only venture onto the streets at night, where their black coloration and natural stealth suit them well. Kenkus seriously dislike traveling in sunlight and garb themselves in dark, tattered clothing to shield themselves from the sun's rays, in addition to helping them blend into surrounding throngs of people. Regardless, only the most elaborate disguises allow kenkus to hide their prodigious beaks.

Psychology and Society of Kenkus

Unlike many fractious evil humanoids, kenkus get along well and work best with others of their own kind. This tight-knit attitude ensures that they never lack for allies to assist them in their sinister schemes.

Kenku society resembles that of some birds, with several family units dwelling together in communities called aeries located in or near large cities. Like other avians, kenkus prefer creating lairs on the highest ground possible in order to keep an eye out for attacks—towers and minarets proving the most valuable real estate in their minds. Failing to find a tall place to make their lair, kenkus go the opposite route, squatting in sewers and long-forgotten basements. Because they never announce their presence unless sorely pressed, kenkus have secretly migrated into such places for millennia, with the original occupants none the wiser. Despite the efforts of law-enforcement and other power groups, kenkus excel at getting into places they aren't wanted. Once an aerie establishes itself, it's extremely difficult to root out.

Even in these communities, kenkus stick close together and spend most of their time interacting with their immediate family or in coteries of like-minded individuals. Kenkus rarely travel anywhere alone, preferring multiple eyes to warn each other of danger or to watch for opportunity.

Kenkus greatly desire wealth, and much like crows and ravens they become obsessed with collecting shiny things. Status within kenku society is measured almost exclusively by ostentatious displays of wealth, regardless of how it was amassed. Theft is perfectly acceptable among kenkus and most aeries are rife with petty bickering as the result of one kenku stealing from another. Kenkus desire knowledge almost as much, particularly the dark secrets

of individuals that they can use for blackmail and extortion.

Ever mindful of their duty to the aerie, even the most selfish kenkus offer a portion of what they find or pilfer to the rest of the flock. Such distributions of food and treasure become true tests of the kenku pecking order, as elder kenkus squawk, squabble, and fight for the finest scraps, while the young and weak look on greedily until their chance to clean up anything that remains. Unsurprisingly, even in a city filled with garbage and abandoned food, starvation proves the primary cause of death among kenkus, followed closely by disease and death by violence. While many races might seek to change their ways in the face of such pointless deaths, kenkus have no sympathy for their brethren who lack the cunning and skill to survive.

Reproduction and child rearing is an odd dichotomy of protectiveness and negligence in kenku society. Kenku females lay eggs like regular birds, but leave the protection of their group's aerie to do so. Creating nests in high, hidden places, mothers seek to avoid scheming eyes and hungry mouths, especially those of their own race. Commonly laid in clutches of three to seven, these eggs hatch after only a month. Once the eggs hatch, the nest is abandoned and the newborns are introduced to the rest of the aerie. Staying close to the communal nests for nearly nine years, the young kenku learn the valuable skills of hiding, taunting others, and stealing unattended objects, all the while forced to fight for even the most meager scraps of food. Attrition is high among young kenku: typically only half survive the first month.

Kenkus commonly show little remorse for the dead. The bodies of young kenkus who have not yet proven themselves valuable to the community are dumped in some lonely, forgotten spot or given to the aerie's clerics for unspeakable purposes. However, older kenkus who die undergo an elaborate ceremony in which the corpse is placed upon a significant height for winged scavengers to feed on and carry the remains aloft. In this way, all kenkus hope to regain their lost ability to fly after death. The height at which a kenku is placed is directly proportional to its usefulness and respect within the community, with most kenku corpses being placed upon tall hills or castle spires. Particularly honored elders might have their bones borne all the way to a mountain top, while the greatest insult is for a body to be deposited merely on the street, left for the dogs and other land-bound scavengers. In all cases, of course, the bodies of the dead are thoroughly stripped of valuables first. Pious kenkus are a rare sight and few feel the desire or inclination to become clerics. Those who do find themselves drawn to darker deities, most notably Vecna, the god of secrets, whose dogma parallels the kenku lust for the forbidden. Some particularly sinister kenku—hoping to garner his favor and return to the skies—turn to the worship of Pazuzu (see page 56 of this issue). The demon prince has not forgotten the kenkus' ancestors' betrayal, however, demanding far more of these cults who in turn seek to placate him with grotesquely elaborate and creative sacrifices. Among kenkus, such demon cults are known as "murders."

Versus Kenkus

Kenkus possess a well-deserved reputation as devious, dangerous opponents who work extremely well with one another. They prefer to attack only when the chance for victory sits squarely on their side. Although not particularly strong or dangerous as individuals, kenkus congregate and attack in groups, posing a serious threat to those who fail to keep an eye out for danger or consider them beneath attention.

It should also be noted that kenku have a level adjustment of +0. Thus, players and DMs might want to consider

BIRDS OF A FEATHER...

Kenkus were first introduced to the Dungeons & Dragons game as part of the original Advanced Dungeons & Dragons *Fiend Folio*. These original kenkus were telepathic, hawk-headed kidnappers who commonly wielded quarterstaffs or samurai swords. Related to tengus, shapeshifting birdmen of Japanese myth, kenku have appeared in numerous adventures throughout D&D's history, as well as being memorably featured in the popular D&D computer adventure *Eye of the Beholder*. The kenku's current statistics appear in the *Monster Manual 3*, and these flightless pilferers make appearances in the *Deathknell* expansion for *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* and the *Dungeon* adventure, "Forsaken Arch," both of which release this month.

TALONS OF REKROK—A KENKU THIEVES' GUILD

The Talons of Rekrok is a band of kenku thieves, assassins, and information brokers typical to most large cities. Named after its leader, the white-feathered elder rogue Rekrok, the Talons maintain a low profile, but are willing to use their impressive skills for anyone willing to pay their exorbitant prices. Primarily focusing on breaking-and-entering, theft, and murder for hire, this group has garnered a well-deserved reputation for efficiency and a lack of scruples.

In order to employ the Talons, the prospective client must meet one of their agents atop a high place—a castle spire, a watchtower roof, or some other place uncomfortably high off the ground and largely inaccessible. With little chance of escape should things go awry, the client must offer, up front, a combination of treasure (the shinier the better) and tidbits of information. Once the kenku operative—usually one of Rekrok's lieutenants—feels the gesture is made in good faith, the client must offer additional loot, serving as the true heart of the deal. While expensive, the client gains the skills of a dedicated band of murderers, thieves, and other unsavory types for whatever job necessary. However, as might be expected, the Talons are perfectly willing to sell out a potential client for a better deal, especially if the risk proves low.

As with any band of kenkus, the Talons of Rekrok work best together, forming small teams composed of specialists who augment each other's skills. A typical band for a common breaking-and-entering job is comprised of two rogues, two warriors, and an assassin/rogue.

kenkus as a player race in addition to those presented in the *Players Handbook*.

Sneaky Foes: When kenkus fight, they do so with stealth and cunning. Kenkus prefer ambushing opponents and despise a direct fight unless they outnumber their enemies by at least two to one. They choose dark alleys, sewer grates, and other cover from which to strike, using it to protect them from harm and provide them with an escape route if things turn sour. Thanks to their Hide and Move Silently bonuses, kenku slink through most areas without concern.

Beware Allies: Kenkus work best together, as most notably shown by their great ally ability. This ability works with any ally, so a kenku fighting with other types of creatures gets this bonus too. Those fighting kenkus and their allies should keep their backs against walls or some other cover to minimize the chance of getting flanked by more than two kenkus. When fighting kenkus, it's best to find one individual and isolate it from its aerie mates, thus denying it this ability. Also, a lone kenku is much more likely to crack from fear and surrender when cornered rather than face death.

Cowardly Combatants: Kenkus possess a deep cowardly streak and flee or surrender as soon as things turn against them. If captured, a kenku offers up almost anything for its release, but always with the thought of treachery in the back of its mind. Non-kenkus who deal with kenkus should never accept their word at face value, as kenkus lie and bend the meanings of agreements without hesitation.

Skilled Sneaks: The strength of a kenku can never be judged based on its race alone. Kenkus are often skilled warriors or rogues, and some might even have levels in fighter or cleric. Older kenkus often multiclass between these roles and might even take up the assassin or shadow dancer prestige class.

Don't Believe What You Hear: The remarkable tongue and throat of a kenku allow it to mimic familiar sounds, voices, and accents. As this ability isn't magical in nature, magic often fails to detect this falsehood. In addition, the untrustworthy and duplicitous nature of a kenku virtually guarantees that anything coming out of its beak is a lie. Those forced to make a deal with a kenku should use treasure as an equalizer, as a kenku's natural tendency to lie fails in the face of serious material gain.

KENKU MIMICRY

One of kenkus' most distinctive abilities is their power of mimicry. While imitating familiar voices to lure victims into ambushes is a tested staple of their strategy, these cunning birdmen have been know to use this ability to many other devious effects.

City Code: On the bustling streets of any large urban center, no one pays any attention to the whiney of horses, the creaking of wagon wheels, or the tolling of distant bells. Yet if such sounds are part of an elaborate kenku code, they might foreshadow some elaborate concerted crime.

Distractions: The sounds of a battle, breaking glass, or a watch whistle are all sure ways to call attention to an area. Or in the case of kenku using these sounds as distractions might serve to divert even the most attentive eyes.

Gaslighting: Blindfolded and trapped, surrounded by the sound of sharpening metal, monstrous snarls, and pain-filled screams, a victim might reveal anything—never realizing he is actually being held by only a single kenku.

Performance: No sound is too complex for a kenku to mimic, not even those of elaborate musical instruments. Kenkus might use their mimicking ability as a means of performance or to weave elaborate musical illusions.

Pseudo Spellcaster: Hooded and cloaked, a kenku might perfectly mimic the chanting prayers and arcane sounds of spellcasters. Although their words hold no magic, those they're trying to intimidate probably don't know that.

Sow Dissension: Another way for kenkus to use voices they overhear is to try to pass themselves off as the original. If the kenku can convince—or even just confuse—a party into thinking that one of their allies is a doppelganger or shape-shifting spellcaster, such dissension might be turned to their advantage.

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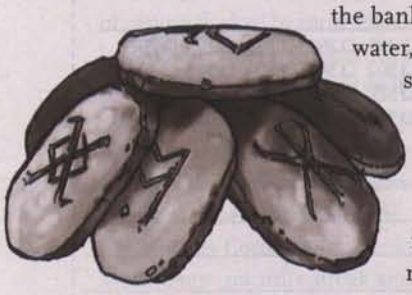
THE STUFF OF LEGENDS

King Arthur wielded the sword Excalibur. Achilles wore the Armor of Hephaestus. Myths are filled will all kinds of magic items that are more than just *+1 longswords*. A perusal of the legends of our own world reveals a wide selection of little-known minor artifacts that you might encounter in your next adventure.

ALATYR

Russian folklore mentions the "father of all stones," named the *Alatyr*, which supposedly rested at the center of the earth. This stone was placed under the World Tree in the center of magical Booyan Island in the middle of the ocean. A river of potent healing water flowed from under the *Alatyr*, and the holy men who called Booyan their home used this water to cure the sick. Gagana, a bird with copper claws and an iron beak, and Garafena the giant snake protected the stone from those who would steal it.

This roughly hemispherical gray stone is inscribed with runes of magic and healing. Twice per day as a full-round action, when the *Alatyr* has been buried in the bank of a natural source of water, its user can call upon the stone to bless those waters so that the next creature to drink from them is healed, as the *heal* spell cast at 11th level. The flowing water retains this magical healing property until used or for 5 rounds after the *Alatyr* is first invoked. If the blessed water is removed from the main water body, it retains its healing ability for 5 rounds or until used. Each use of the *Alatyr* can only *heal* one creature, regardless of how much water is affected. The *Alatyr* must be buried at least 3 inches below the surface, which typically requires a full-round action.



Strong conjuration; CL 21st; Weight 2 lb.

CANOLA'S HARP

According to Celtic myth, the heroine Canola had a particularly heated argument with a lover, and so she left his bed to wander in the open air one particularly dark night. Walking on the beach she heard beautiful music, and was soon lulled to sleep. Awakening to the morning sun, Canola discovered the music she had followed in the dark had been made by the wind, blowing through rotted sinews clinging to the skeleton of a whale. Inspired by the sight and the music that had put her to sleep, she built the first harp.

Canola's harp is a masterwork Irish harp carved from deeply textured bleached wood to look as though it were made from bones. These harps are prized for their particu-

larly rich tones, and characters with 5 ranks in Perform (string instruments) can use *Canola's harp* to cast *deep slumber* once per day. Any bard using *Canola's harp* gains a +1 insight bonus when making a countersong or *fascinate* bardic music check. This bonus stacks with that gained from a masterwork musical instrument.

Strong enchantment; CL 17th; Weight 3 lb.

DURANDAL

Roland, the 8th-century Frankish hero of Christian medieval Europe, won his sword *Durandal*—once the sword of Hector of Troy—along with the horn *Olifant* from the giant Jutmundus. Roland carried the blade while commanding the rearguard of Charlemagne's army as it withdrew from Spain. As the army moved through the Pyrenees, intent on quelling a Saxon revolt in Germany, another army formed of Basques and Gascons attacked at Roncesvalles. Unwilling to surrender, Roland and his men fought to the very end, allowing the rest of the Frankish army to escape. When it became clear he would fall Roland attempted to break *Durandal* upon a great rock. But the indestructible sword instead cleaved a 300-foot cleft through the Pyrenees. Unable to break the sword and mortally wounded, Roland hurled it into a poisonous stream, where it supposedly would remain forever. *Durandal* is described as a well-used gladius whose hilt contains a thread from the cloak of the Virgin Mary, a tooth of St. Peter, a hair of St. Denys, and a drop of St. Basil's blood.

Durandal is an intelligent *+1 holy mighty cleaving adamantine short sword* (LG, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 13, Ego 5) that possesses empathy with the wielder. Three times per day, *Durandal* can cast both *bless* and *remove fear* upon its wielder (only). *Durandal* uses its empathy to urge the wielder to be brave and righteous, particularly when faced with overwhelming danger.

Strong evocation [good]; CL 25th; Weight 2 lb.

FOUNT OF ACADINE

In the ancient world, the Sicilian *Fount of Acadine* reportedly possessed magical properties. Documents thrown in the fountain could be tested for their authenticity based upon their buoyancy. Genuine works floated, while forgeries sank. A similar test could be performed on a promise. After copying the oath on a sheet of parchment and placing it in the magical fountain, those that bore lies would sink to the bottom while those promises that the oath-maker intended to keep would float.

This small marble fountain is decorated with detailed carvings portraying judges and learned folk teaching to groups of students. To use the *Fount of Acadine*, a written work unprotected from any damage that submersion in water might cause must be placed into the fountain's water. Forgeries gently sink to the bottom of the fountain after 1d4 minutes while original documents always float, regardless of their natural buoyancy. If an oath or promise is written upon a sheet of parchment and placed within the fountain, it sinks to the bottom of the fountain after 1d4 minutes if the writer does not intend to carry out the promise as written. If the oath-maker intends to honor the promise to the best of his ability, the parchment floats.

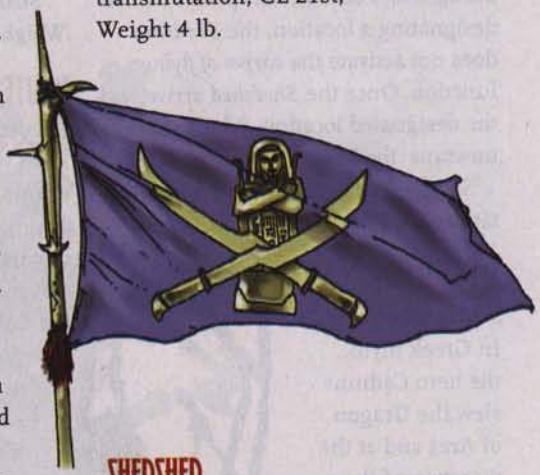
Strong divination; CL 21st; Weight 180 lb.

KONGO

The red-faced Japanese mountain god Koya-no-Myoin of Mount Koya was seen as a hunter with two hounds and carrying the *Kongo*—a three-pronged staff that emits a bright light when exposed to darkness. Legends say that all who hold the *Kongo* of Koya-no-Myoin are granted wisdom and insight.

The *Kongo* is a *+2 defending wooden trident* that sheds light equal to a torch and is as tough as adamantine. The *Kongo* is extremely plain, with no markings found upon it. While held, the *Kongo* grants its bearer a +4 enhancement bonus to Wisdom.

Strong abjuration and transmutation; CL 21st; Weight 4 lb.



SHEDSHED

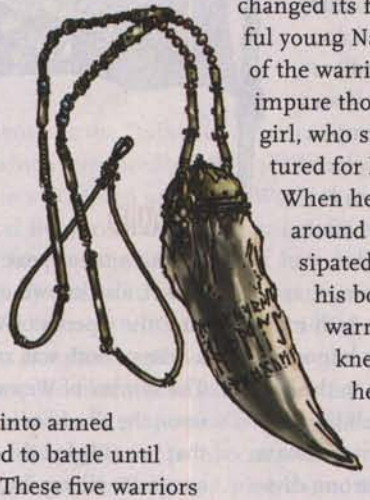
Egyptian tales speak of the god Wepwawet, also known as Oupouaout and "the Opener of Ways," who was a deity of both war and funeral rites. The symbol of Wepwawet was depicted upon the *Shedshed*, a magical standard that not only led the pharaoh and his armies to victory, but also would allow him to ascend into the sky and from there to the afterlife, should he ever die. Wepwawet relates to Osiris and Re-Horakhty from *Deities & Demigods*.

To function, the *Shedshed* must be affixed to a hafted weapon with reach, such as a glaive, guisarme, halberd, lance, longspear, ranseur, or spear. While held aloft, the bearer and all

allies within 30 feet gain a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks. In addition, should the bearer be reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, the *Shedshed* functions as a 5-foot by 5-foot *carpet of flying*, wrapping its bearer within itself and removing him from harm. This function also occurs whenever the bearer is staggered, unconscious, or dead. While wrapped within the *Shedshed* the bearer is not subject to attacks, although the *Shedshed* itself may be attacked as usual. The *Shedshed* has an AC of 13 (+3 Dex), hardness 0, and 2 hp. While inside the *Shedshed*, the bearer can take no actions. In order to use this ability, the bearer must designate a location where the *Shedshed* brings the unconscious or dead bearer. Designating the location requires only a free action. If the bearer is brought to 0 or fewer hit points before designating a location, the *Shedshed* does not activate the *carpet of flying* function. Once the *Shedshed* arrives at the designated location, it lands and unwraps the bearer.

Strong enchantment and transmutation; CL 20th; Weight 8 lb.

TEETH OF THE SOWN MEN



In Greek myth, the hero Cadmus slew the Dragon of Ares and at the direction of the goddess Athena planted the foul monster's teeth in the soil. Moments later the teeth sprouted into armed men who proceeded to battle until only five were left. These five warriors joined with Cadmus to found the city of Thebes. Later, King Aeetes of Colchis gave the hero Jason of the Argonauts a series of ordeals in order to win the Golden Fleece from him. One of these was to sow the remaining teeth of the dragon that Cadmus has slain and fight the men that sprouted from them.

The *Teeth of the Sown Men*—also sometimes called the *Teeth of the Dragon*—are small dragon's teeth with a band of runes running around the circumference of each tooth. Typically found in groups of 3 to 18, the teeth spring into human fighters when planted in the soil (one fighter per tooth). These fighters perform the tooth-planter's bidding with unquestioning loyalty for 1 hour or until slain. At the end of the hour, the remaining fighters and all their gear turn to dust. A tooth must be buried at least 3 inches below the surface, which typically requires a full-round action. On the next round, each buried tooth becomes a 1st-level human fighter with the abilities and equipment as a 1st-level NPC fighter as shown on page 117 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*.

Strong conjuration; CL 15th; Weight —.

WHITE BUFFALO CALF PIPE

According to legend, two thousand years ago in the Black Hills of South Dakota a white buffalo calf approached two Lakota hunters and changed its form into that of a beautiful young Native American girl. One of the warriors immediately had impure thoughts about the young girl, who smiled at him and gestured for him to come forward. When he did so, a cloud rose up around him and when it dissipated, nothing remained but his bones. When the other warrior saw this he fell to his knees and began to pray. As he prayed, the White Buffalo Calf Woman told him to return to his people and prepare for her coming in four days, for she would bring the Lakota a great gift. The hunter ran back to his people and they prepared as they were asked to do. Four days later, just as she had said, a white buffalo calf came down from the sky upon a cloud. As it stepped from the cloud, the calf became the young girl known as White Buffalo Calf Woman. She spent four days among the Lakota and taught them seven sacred ceremonies along with many blessed songs to make them caretakers and guardians of land. On her last day with the Lakota she left behind a sacred pipe known as the White Buffalo Calf Pipe and said she would return to purify the world when the Lakota saw the birth of three white buffalo calves.

The *White Buffalo Calf Pipe* is a large wooden pipe wrapped in white leather and decorated with several feathers. As a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity the bearer can light and smoke from the *White Buffalo Calf Pipe*. On the following round, the bearer may exhale the smoke and produce a 30-foot diameter cloud centered on the pipe. The thin smoke does not obscure vision, but all living creatures other than the pipe's bearer must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or fall under the effects of a *calm emotions* spell. In addition to the *calm emotions* ability of the pipe, once per day the pipe's bearer can sit in a circle and share the pipe with up to ten others. After smoking the pipe for an hour, all who share the *White Buffalo Calf Pipe* receive the benefits of a *hero's feast* spell.

The *White Buffalo Calf Pipe* bestows one negative on level any evil creature touching or carrying it. The negative level remains as long as the evil creature has possession of the pipe and disappears when the pipe is no longer carried. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the pipe is carried.

Strong divination; CL 21st; Weight 1 lb.

Backpack (empty): 2gp
Rope, hemp (50 ft.): 1gp
Donkey or mule: 8gp
Saddlebags: 4gp
Wagon: 35gp
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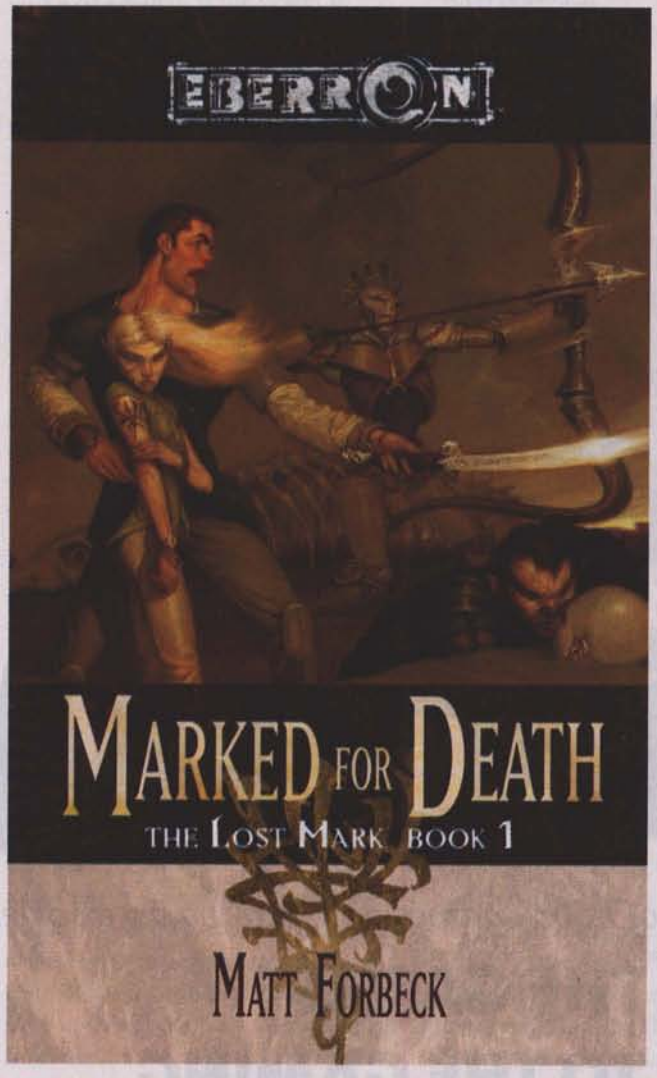
MARKED FOR DEATH



Marked for Death is the first in the Lost Mark Trilogy, a series of three novels that take place in the exciting EBERRON campaign setting. (Keith Baker, the creator of EBERRON, first ventures into this world with *City of Towers*, the first novel in the Dreaming Dark Trilogy, available now.) *Marked for Death* releases this month.

THE STORY

The short story "Coming Home," which will appear in *DRAGON* #330, presents a prequel to the events in the Lost Mark Trilogy. It tells the story of how four heroes find a crater on the edge of the Mournland and decided to found a town there, with the intent of forming a settlement of displaced souls from the annihilated nation of Cyre. Those who come to live there hope to someday plumb the secrets of their country's ruin—now known as the Mournland—and restore their homeland to some semblance of its former glory.

Marked for Death opens a few years later with that town, Mardakine, in crisis. In the past weeks, residents of the town have been disappearing and it falls to Kandler and Burch, the law in the settlement, to put a stop to it. As the story begins, they're not having much luck.

At this time, a group of Knights of the Silver Flame—an order of paladins—enter town looking for a guide to help them track down a prophesized individual supposedly bearing the lost, thirteenth dragonmark: the Mark of Death. Soon after, those responsible for the disappearances in Mardakine (a band of vampires aligned with the sinister religion known as the Blood of Vol) attack the paladins in full force.

With the help of the paladins, the townspeople rout the vampires. As the bloodsuckers leave town, their changeling compatriot Te'oma takes Kandler's stepdaughter Esprë hostage, warning Kandler, Burch, and the knights not to follow.

At first light, the heroes give chase into the Mournland. In the course of their quest to rescue Esprë they encounter numerous bands of warforged and a deathless elf wizard driven mad on the Day of Mourning—the strange event that supposedly killed everyone in the nation of Cyre and transformed the place into the deadly and oppressive Mournland.

Stealing an airship from the wizard they pursue Te'oma. Their journey leads them to Construct, a mobile city of warforged built by the followers of the Lord of Blades (detailed in *Dungeon* #115), the leader of a warforged revolutionary movement. There they must battle for their freedom and for Esprë's life.

Thematic Ideas

Marked for Death concentrates on three themes that might fit into most any D&D campaign: the importance of loyalty, the effects of religion, and the significance of family.

Loyalty

Several times throughout *Marked for Death*, the heroes must choose between sticking with their friends and family or simply walking away. Sometimes such choices aren't easy ones. Often in D&D campaigns, adventurers are faced with these same kinds of personal quandaries, facing a choice between confronting impossible danger to aid allies, or merely running away.

Forcing your characters to make these kinds of decisions helps determine who they are by defining what's most important to them. Are they heroes in the traditional sense, or do they simply care about themselves? The only way to find out is to put them to the test. If an ally gets snatched up and stolen away by some incredibly powerful monster, such as a dragon or a band of mind flayers, does the party take chase or is he considered dead already? Such questions of loyalty might also stretch beyond mere in-game, roleplaying situations. Forced to choose between a fellow PC and an important NPC, like a family member or teacher, most players find themselves torn between the metagame desires of the player sitting across the table and the in-game bonds of family and friendship.

In either case, these sorts of tests can rip a party apart, so tread carefully. If two factions in the group strongly believe in choosing different paths, the differences might quickly become personal.

About the Author

Matt Forbeck established his reputation as a game designer and a short story writer long before venturing into crafting novels. Wizards of the Coast published his first mass-market novel last year: *Secret of the Spiritkeeper*, the first in the Knights of the Silver Dragon series of young adult fantasy books. No stranger to Dungeons & Dragons, having written and edited several products for TSR, he more recently wrote parts of the *Stronghold Builder's Guidebook*, *Races of Faerûn*, and *Unapproachable East* for Wizards of the Coast.

Forbeck also servered as co-founder and president of Pinnacle Entertainment Group for four years, during which he worked as the first editor of the Deadlands line and created the Brave New World line. He's also known for his work on the WildStorms collectible card game, *Redhurst Academy of Magic*, *Dracula's Revenge* (both the board game and the comics), *Mutant Chronicles*, and *Silent Death: The Next Millennium*. For more about Forbeck's works and current projects, check out **forbeck.com**.

What's in It for You?

Marked for Death faithfully follows the cliffhanger tropes of the *Eberron Campaign Setting*, but it's also something of a travelogue. In its course, the heroes cross much of the Mournland and learn a lot about it from an outsider's point of view. Adventures set in the Mournland could draw upon a great deal of the material in the book for both interesting locations and encounters, as well as the general mood of the accursed place.

For players, there are some good ideas for how you might react to prophecies. If your religious order's highest official sends you out on a quest that seems like a death sentence, can you rely on the strength of your faith to survive? Will such a trial break your faith, or temper it?

Marked for Death also presents some great examples of intraparty conflict as many of the heroes posess conflicting agendas. Kandler and Burch just want to save Esprë, but they have little idea of the true nature of the web in which they've been snared. The Knights of the Silver Flame, however, bear secrets they refuse to share, causing tensions that stretch the group to the breaking point.

For Dungeon Masters, *Marked for Death* provides insight into warforged culture, at least among the followers of the Lord of Blades. One revelation is that the lieutenants of the Lord of Blades are all named after various kinds of bladed weapons. For example, the leader of Construct bears a name that he lives up to in many ways: Bastard.

The city of Construct alone could be the basis of an entire campaign. The fact that it moves around, carried on the backs of hundreds if not thousands of constructs, means that it could appear anywhere in the Mournland or possibly even outside the wretched place. Imagine what the neighboring kingdoms might think when they learn that such a city-vehicle exists and could come marching into their homelands.

Religion

In Eberron, deities are distant and uncaring beings who rarely if ever meddle in the affairs of mortals. This makes religion far more a matter of pure faith than in many other fantasy worlds. Even the clerics of Eberron have little if any proof of the existence of their deities. They feel divine power flowing through them, but they cannot say for sure that this isn't simply some strange form of sorcery that manifests itself with religious trappings.

Given the horrors inflicted upon Eberron it's easy to see how some people might give up on the idea of worshiping the divine. Especially embittered people might even become radical atheists heaping scorn and derision upon those who still cling to their faith.

As an interesting plot twist, a deity might test the faith of a paladin or cleric in a party. Without access to divine magic or other religious powers does the character have any reason to cling to his faith? Does the character actually continue to adhere to the tenants and philosophies of his religion, or was his faith all merely lip-service paid in exchange for divine power? DMs using such a plot device should take care not to weaken and limit characters in their party needlessly or for too long, as it might unbalance adventures and frustrate players. Characters who adhere to their deity's doctrines throughout such a test should be rewarded, while the unfaithful might be punished with some difficult holy quest.

Family

In many campaigns, little thought is given to the characters' families. In *Marked for Death*, matters of family come up time and again. The residents of the town of Mardakine act like an extended family themselves. Despite this, Kandler and Burch sometimes feel like outsiders, as they weren't born citizens of Cyre like the others. It's Kandler's marriage to an elf from Cyre that gives these two their ties to the place. That and Kandler's stepdaughter Esprë, who he's been left to raise after her mother's death on the Day of Mourning.

The fact that Kandler not only has a stepdaughter but treasures her enough to give up his life as a soldier to raise her speaks volumes about his character. Player characters might end up with similar responsibilities in a number of ways. They could end up having to raise a younger sibling, a niece or nephew, or any young child in need of a strong family figure. This then raises the question of what's more important: adventuring or ensuring your charge's safety.

Of course, it's not always that simple. If the character needs to make a living, then adventuring may be the only way he or she knows how. Also, if the fate of the world or even just a town is at stake, the child's fate becomes wound up in that. This raises the stakes to the point that a character loses the option of just walking away.

DMs looking to add a truly unexpected twist to their games might have a party rescue an orphaned baby from a group of monsters or make their villain the sole caretaker of an infant. Should the PCs do the heroic thing and take custody of the child, they might find themselves hundreds of miles from any suitable foster parents and, for a time, forced to cope with the needs of a helpless ward. Besides raising all sorts of questions about care and protection, the simple issue of having a child who loudly complains about its hunger regardless of the party's need for stealth might prove an interesting obstacle all its own.

Flight and Flame

Marked for Death introduces several new magical innovations and monstrosities to the world of Eberron, most notably the swift air cutter airship and the deadly living fireball.

Air Cutter

The aircutter is a small airship that can be crewed by a single person at the helm. It stretches 40 feet from stem to stern, and its beam is 15-feet across. It has a wide and shallow hold, in which the crew and passengers sleep. An aircutter can carry two tons of cargo.

Like larger airships, the aircutter has no sails. Rather, a Large fire elemental propels it through the sky. This elemental is bound into the form of a ring that's attached to the ship via a pair of rune-covered arches that terminate near the aft of the ship.

The aircutter is steered by means of a wheel on a raised bridge at the ship's stern. The wheel does not move. The person at the helm holds the wheel and concentrates on the direction in which the ship is to move. The elemental reads these thoughts and moves the ship as directed.

The aircutter flies at roughly 30 miles per hour through calm skies. It has average maneuverability, but it can hover in place (no minimum speed restrictions apply).

Strong conjuration; CL 12; Bind Elemental, *planar binding*; Price 55,000 gp.

Living Fireball

Medium Ooze
Hit Dice: 5d10+5 (32 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 11, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+4
Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d4+1 plus *fireball*)
Full Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d4+1 plus *fireball*)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Engulf, explode
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/magic, ooze traits, spell resistance 15
Saves: Fort +5, Ref + 5, Will +5
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 15
Skills: —
Feats: —
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 6–14 HD (Large); 15–20 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

A ball of violently flickering flame rumbles toward you, a path of smoldering embers trailing behind.

A living fireball is an ever-erupting explosion of flame and concussive force. Rolling like destructive tumbleweeds across the devastated plains of the Mournland, these volatile creatures leave nothing but scorched earth and charred bones in their wake.

Combat

A living fireball attacks with single-minded intent. Making frequent use of its explode ability, living fireballs charge into battle and bathe their enemies in wave after wave of magical flame.

Engulf (Ex): A living fireball can flow around a Medium or smaller creature as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. A living fireball merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living fireball, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 13 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the spell moves forward. Engulfed creatures take 5d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 13 half) and are considered to be grappled.

Explode (Su): Every time a living fireball strikes a target with its slam attack or engulfs a creature, it explodes in a blast that reproduces the effects of the *fireball* spell. Creatures within 20 feet of a living fireball when it explodes take 5d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 14 half).

Ooze Traits: An ooze is blind (blindsight 60 ft.) and is immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight. It has immunity to mind-affecting spells and abilities, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning. It is not subject to extra damage from critical hits or flanking.

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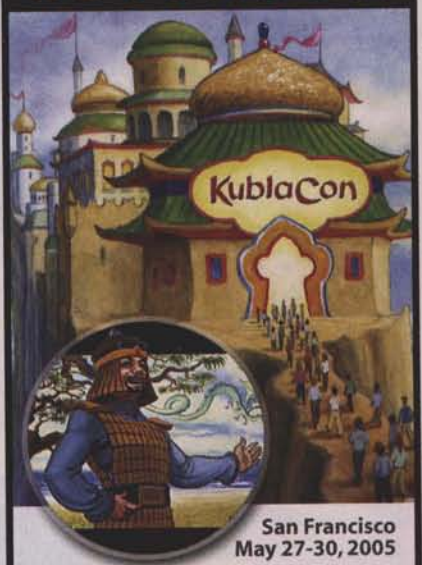

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OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage stakes out some answers regarding the walking dead, and throws in some "construct"-ive help as well. You can email the Sage your questions at **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

Undead and constructs are immune to critical hits, but are they immune to flanking as well?

No. A construct or undead creature can be flanked normally unless its description specifically indicates otherwise.

Can a corporeal undead be affected by a *flesh to stone* spell? What about a wizard's homunculus?

Both undead and constructs are immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless. *Flesh to stone* falls into neither of those categories, as its saving throw entry states that "Fortitude negates" and its target entry explains that it only affects "one creature" (not one creature or object, nor one creature or specified area).

Undead and constructs are immune to ability damage and ability drain, but are they immune to ability score penalties such as that created by the *ray of enfeeblement* spell?

Undead and constructs aren't innately immune to ability score penalties. Note, however, that *ray of enfeeblement* and many similar spells that apply such penalties are necromantic effects, which constructs (but not undead) are immune to. So that *ray of enfeeblement* will work just fine against a wight, but not against a shield guardian.

The golem description in the *Monster Manual* says that golems are immune to magic, but the individual golem descriptions say they're only immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. Which one is right?

The "immunity to magic" entry in the opening text of the golem entry (page 134 of the *Monster Manual*) is only a general description of that special quality. Each golem's specific immunity to magic entry provides the actual rules mechanics for adjudicating that immunity.

For example, a clay golem is immune to *fireball* (because that spell allows spell resistance), but not to *Melf's acid arrow* (because it doesn't allow spell resistance). It would be immune to *disintegrate*, except for the special note that follows indicating the effect of a *disintegrate* spell on a clay golem.

**While stone golems are immune to magic and have DR 10/adamantine, would an alchemical substance such as stonebreaker acid (from *Arms &*

***Equipment Guide*) have an effect on it? The acid only affects stone and deals 3d10 points of damage on the first round and 2d10 points of damage on the second round.**

A stone golem would suffer the normal damage from stonebreaker acid. Damage reduction doesn't reduce acid damage (the way hardness does). A stone golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance, but stonebreaker acid is neither.

If a construct has to make a Concentration check, what ability modifier do I apply on the check? Is it –5, just as if the score were 0?

Having no ability score (that is, an entry of "—") is different from having a score of 0. If a creature has no ability score (such as a construct, which has no Constitution score), the ability modifier for that score is +0. (See page 7 in the *Monster Manual*.) Thus, a construct has a +0 modifier from its Constitution on Fortitude saves, Concentration checks, and any other Con-based roll.

The same rule applies to undead (which have no Constitution score), vermin (which have no Intelligence score), or any other creature that lacks an ability score. Remember that undead are specially noted on page 317 of the *Monster Manual* as using their Charisma modifier for Concentration checks (but not on any other Con-based rolls).

Is there any saving throw to resist the negative level applied by the energy drain attack of a vampire or other undead creature?

Typically no. In most cases where a creature has an energy drain attack, the negative levels are automatically applied. The save only occurs 24 hours later, determining whether the negative level results in a permanent level loss.

Does the sun power of a *sunblade* (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 228) count as sunlight for the purpose of affecting vampires or other creatures vulnerable to sunlight?

The *sunblade's* description notes that this "bright yellow radiance" is "like full daylight." This only indicates the brightness of the illumination, but not any other effects. A vampire within the area of the radiance therefore suffers no ill effects. To be deadly to such creatures, the description would have to say something like "this radiance is treated as sunlight for all purposes" or the like.

How big is a lich's phylactery?

The *Monster Manual* describes the most common form of a lich's phylactery as a Tiny metal box. *Libris Mortis* provides some additional examples of lich phylacteries, but establishes that the object is always of Tiny size.

Where exactly, in relationship to its phylactery, does a destroyed lich reappear?

The rules are silent on this issue. The Sage believes it reasonable to assume that the lich reappears in the immediate vicinity of its phylactery, as that is where its lifeforce is stored. (That's how the Sage has interpreted the rule in his past campaigns.) This suggests that any hiding-place for a phylactery must allow enough nearby space for the lich's body to reappear. Ultimately, though, the rules don't indicate a clear answer to this question, leaving it up to DMs to rule as they prefer. Either way, the answer should remain constant within a campaign, and it should be possible for characters to learn how this works (such as via a Knowledge [religion] check).

What type of area does turning or rebuking undead affect? The *Player's Handbook* says that a character must have line of effect but need not have line of sight to the undead he is trying to affect, but it doesn't specify the shape of the area.

A turn/rebuke attempt is similar to, but not exactly like, a 60-foot-radius spherical burst. Like a burst, the effect expands from the point of origin (which must be a grid intersection of the turning character's space) out to a maximum distance from the point of origin. Like a burst, a turn attempt can't affect creatures with total cover from the point of origin (that is, it can't go around corners).

However, unlike a true burst, a turn/rebuke attempt doesn't automatically affect all creatures within its maximum "area." The "energy" of the turn/rebuke attempt might become exhausted before reaching the extent of the area (because the turning character has run out of Hit Dice that he can affect), or it may skip over creatures (because the creature's HD exceeds the turning character's maximum HD affected). Compare this to a *fireball*, a burst-shaped spell that affects all creatures within its area regardless of their number or HD.

Ultimately, a turn attempt doesn't really have an "area"—it has a maximum number of targets it can affect (determined by the turning damage roll), each of which cannot exceed a designated HD cap (determined by the cleric's level and his turning check result). While thinking of it as a burst can help somewhat, it can also lead to confusion, so the Sage doesn't advise mixing up the terms in this way.

When a cleric has a temporary bonus to his Charisma score, does it affect his turning check or turning damage? Does it change the number of times he can turn or rebuke per day?

Unless otherwise stated, a temporary bonus to an ability score has the same effect as a permanent one. For example, a cleric with a temporary +4 enhancement bonus to Charisma (such as from *eagle's splendor*) would add 2 to his turning check and to his turning damage while the spell was in effect, since his Charisma modifier is 2 points higher than it was before.

Things get a little stickier when talking about powers with daily limits, such as turn/rebuke undead or lay on hands. (Hold on, because this gets worse before it gets better.) In this case, a change to the key ability score indeed affects the daily limit—in the example above, the cleric would gain 2 additional turn/rebuke attempts per day—but these aren't just "free" uses. Here's why:

Assume the cleric above has a normal Charisma score of 12, granting him 4 turn attempts per day (3 + 1 for Cha bonus). Casting *eagle's splendor* increases his Charisma to 16, which would grant 6 attempts per day. At the end of the spell, however, his daily limit would drop back down to 4 attempts. At that point, the player must compare the number of daily uses expended to the daily limit to see if any still remain.

Here's how that might work in play. Our cleric turns undead twice, then casts *eagle's splendor* right before a big fight with a horde of zombies. During the duration of the spell, he makes four more turning checks. When the spell ends, he compares his new daily limit (4) to the number of attempts used (6)—whoops, no turns left. Hope all the undead have been destroyed, because even if the cleric cast *eagle's splendor* again, he wouldn't have any more turning attempts available, since he's already used all 6 of his allotted attempts. If he were able to increase his Charisma to 18, he'd "gain" one more turning attempt (since he's now used 6 out of his allotted 7 daily attempts), useable only during the duration of the Charisma-boosting effect.

The same is true of the paladin's lay on hands ability. If the paladin gains a temporary Charisma boost, her total capacity of healing via lay on hands improves accordingly, but she must keep track of the healing "used up" to see if any remains after the boost ends.

Temporary ability reductions (such as penalties or damage) work similarly. When a reduction is applied, do the math as if a bonus had just elapsed to see if any daily uses are left, and reverse that when the reduction goes away to see what (if anything) is regained. If our cleric above were hit by *touch of idiocy* and suffered a –4 penalty to Charisma, his daily limit of turning attempts would be reduced from 4 to 2; if he's already used 2 or more, he'll have none available as long as the spell's effect lasts.

This seems more complicated than it actually is. As long as you remember that the important number to track is not uses remaining, but uses expended, everything else should fall into place.

Can a cleric turn undead while under the effects of *greater invisibility*? Page 159 of the *Player's Handbook* only says that the cleric must present his holy symbol to attempt of turn undead. Does "present" imply that the holy symbol must be visible or just held forth?

Concealment is irrelevant when determining whether a creature is affected by a turning check: "You don't need line of sight to a target" (*Player's Handbook*, page 159). Just as an invisible lich could be affected by a visible cleric, a visible vampire could be turned by an invisible cleric.

It bears mentioning that turning or rebuking undead counts as an attack for the purpose of ending an *invisibility* spell. Of course, using a turn/rebuke attempt for some other purpose—such as powering a divine feat, such as those from *Complete Divine*—might or might not count as an attack, depending on the effect of the feat.

Dragon

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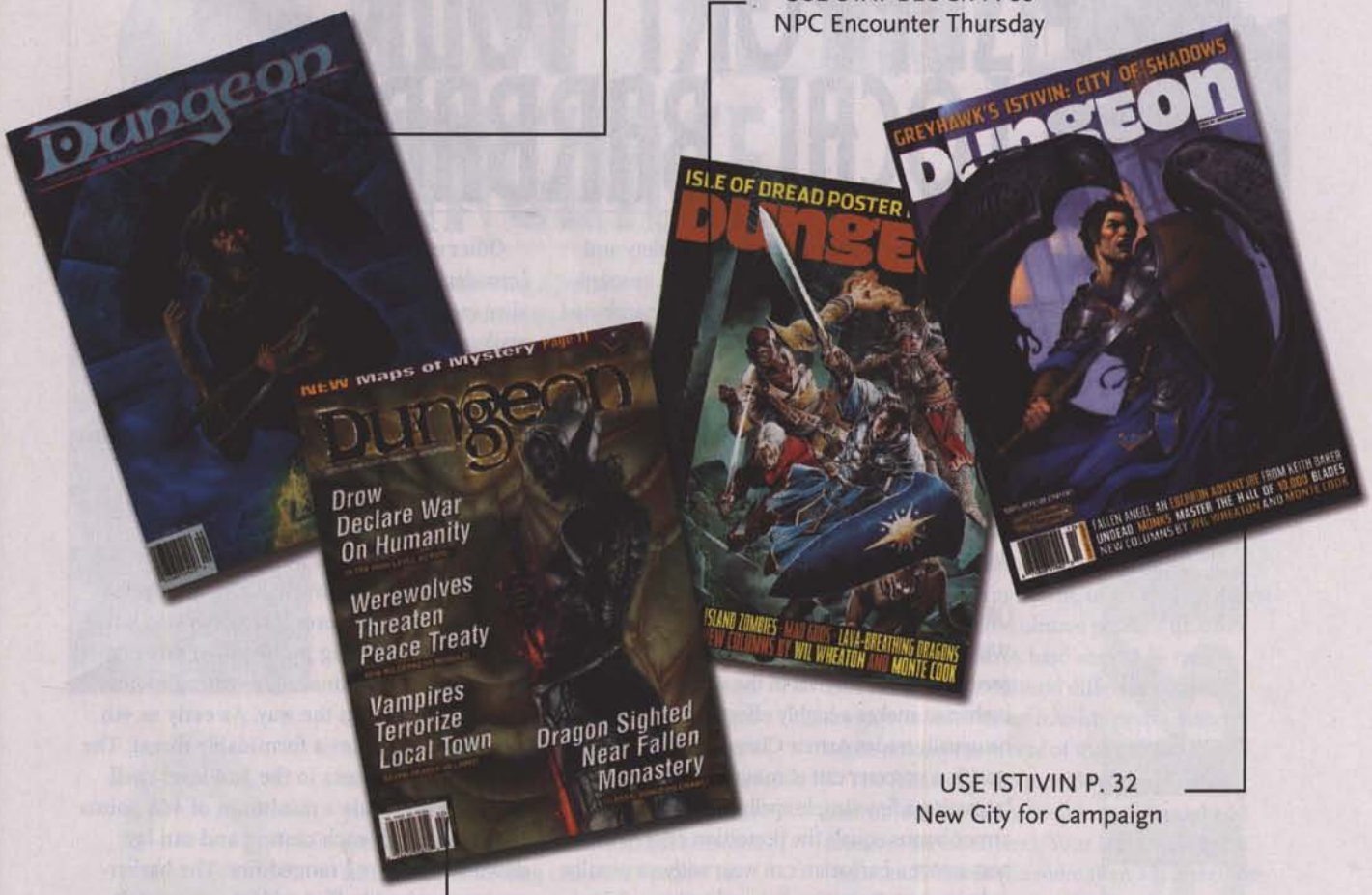

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by Tracy Taylor

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BARBARIAN

BARBARIAN

What the barbarian lacks in subtlety and Armor Class, he makes up for in toughness and sheer ferocity. When combined with the high number of spells a sorcerer provides, the barbarian becomes an even greater threat to his enemies. Whether as a preemptive measure, a protective precaution, or part of an offensive mission, a well-equipped sorcerer ally or cohort can enhance the chaotic and savage barbarian to produce efficient and devastating effects.

ON A SCOUTING MISSION

With his increased speed, trap sense, and natural predilection for survival in the wilderness, the barbarian makes a highly effective scout. While he usually trades Armor Class for speed and stealth, a sorcerer can eliminate his drawbacks by casting a few simple spells. *Mage armor's* +4 armor bonus equals the protection offered by the best armor a barbarian can wear without penalty: a chain shirt. *Protection from evil* and *invisibility* further enhance both the barbarian's Armor Class and his ability to sneak in for a closer look. The sorcerer's innate ability to cast a spell multiple times without advanced preparation enables her to follow and support her barbarian companion as he faces each situation head on. The sorcerer also provides, especially at higher levels, the ability to overcome most obstacles the barbarian cannot simply bash through with spells like *dimension door* and *fly*.

PROVIDING PROTECTION

A sorcerer can increase the barbarian's chances of surviving into old age by casting spells just before a battle. Aside from boosting his Armor Class, the sorcerer can improve the barbarian's ability to hit and deal damage with *bull's strength* and increase his hit points and the length of his rage with *bear's endurance*. As these bonuses stack with those provided by the barbarian's rage, a barbarian can benefit from a potential net effect of +6 to Armor Class and +8 to Strength and Constitution.

Other excellent spells a sorcerer should consider when trying to keep his barbaric ally alive include *displacement* and *stoneskin*. *Haste* works particularly well at enhancing a barbarian's talents, granting bonuses to attack and movement while shoring up the barbarian's often low Armor Class. Finally, *heroism* makes the barbarian a terrifying combatant while boosting his saving throws.

DESTROYING THE ENEMY

Most problems go away by creating a pile of dead foes. The sorcerer/barbarian combination excels at solving problems in this manner, generally eliminating anything foolish enough to stand in the way. As early as 4th level, the pair poses a formidable threat. The sorcerer, with access to the 2nd-level spell *scorching ray*, deals a minimum of 4d6 points of damage with each casting and can lay down suppressing ranged fire. The barbarian, raging and buffed with the sorcerer's 1st- and 2nd-level spells (as described previously) can use his fast movement to close into melee. This one-two punch becomes more pronounced as the characters advance in levels and power. The sorcerer who casts multiple *fireballs*, *lightning bolts*, and other damage-dealing spells reduces the enemy's overall toughness from a safe distance, granting the barbarian a better chance of gaining extra attacks from the deadly Power Attack and Cleave combination.

For more subtle support in the cause of death and destruction, the sorcerer should consider casting *slow* on particularly speedy opponents. Sometimes even the barbarian's fast movement can fail to keep him in the mix of things.

While often unable to neatly overcome situations that require a high Intelligence or Wisdom, the sorcerer/barbarian team proves particularly devastating, making it one of the most effective damage-dealing combinations of character classes in the game.

by Troy E. Taylor

USING THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

BARD

Invariably, seeking adventure in exotic locales means encountering people who don't speak a language you know. How do you establish communication before a misunderstanding arises and someone's skull ends up decorating the entrance to the village burial grounds?

Let the bard have a try at using music—the universal language—to convey the party's intentions. After all, the bard is a storyteller uniquely qualified to diffuse a tense situation with a performance that can improve NPC attitudes.

PERFORMING DIPLOMACY

Without question, the bard's music can set a mood. It can also send a message. A lighthearted tune indicates playfulness while a somber one conveys sadness. A briskly played piece can mean urgency, a slow one, tenderness. Marching tunes have martial overtones, while a pastoral song can mean peace. In addition, tone, tempo, pitch, and other musical nuances can evoke certain emotions and convey messages generally understood by intelligent creatures.

A bard can improve his chance of being understood if he uses an instrument or dance native to the exotic locale.

Your DM might disallow or severely penalize Diplomacy checks (by as much as –10) when you and the NPCs lack a common language. The following optional rule allows a bard to use his Perform check to aid his Diplomacy checks made to influence the attitudes of NPCs with whom he does not share a language. The character attempting to use this optional rule must have at least one bard level and may use any Perform skill except Perform (comedy) or Perform (oratory)—both of which require the audience to understand the bard's words. Once the bard makes his Perform check, he may then attempt a Diplomacy check to influence an NPC's attitude within the next 10 minutes. The result of his Perform check modifies his Diplomacy check as noted below.

Perform Result	Diplomacy Modifier
Less than 15	None
15–24	Reduce penalties by 1
25–34	Reduce penalties by 50%
35+	Eliminate penalties

EXOTIC MUSICAL TRADITIONS

Whether a tropical island, an inhabited "lost city" deep in the rainforest, or a dazzling desert kingdom, different cultures possess unique musical traditions. A bard should be on the lookout for these cultural differences and attempt to work them into his performances while among members of that culture.

The following lists provide a sampling of instruments or dance traditions that might be found in an exotic land. Your DM might grant you a small bonus (no more than +2) if you use one of these in the appropriate locale.

Desert Kingdom: Dance—balady (belly dance); Percussion—daff (tambourine), tablah (vase-shaped hand drum); String—buzuq (long-necked fretted instrument with two strings), oud (pear-shaped forerunner of lute), qanun (81-string dulcimer with trapezoid flat board); Wind—mijwiz (double reed clarinet), nay (single reed pipe with seven holes).

Islands: Dance—hula; Percussion—ka-eke-eke (tall bamboo pipes stamped on the ground), pahu (large drum), pahu-pa'i (drum with shark-skin head); String—ukeke (bow with two or three strings); Wind—ni-au-kani (mouth harp of coconut leaf and thin wood), ohe-hano-ihu (nose flute of bamboo), pu (conch shell).

Rainforest: Dance—morenada; Percussion—agago (wood or metal gong), bongo, djun djun (stick drum carved from a log), doumbek (chalice-shaped drum of brass, copper, or wood), kalimba (thumb piano of flat wood with metal tongues), rattles; String—charango (ukulele); Wind—n'far (long horn of copper), oja (common short whistle).

by Amber E. Scott

TOKENS OF FAITH II

CLERIC

Alternative holy symbols can go a long way toward personalizing your cleric. An unusual holy symbol makes your cleric both distinctive and memorable. When selecting a holy symbol for your character, use the sample symbols included here as both alternatives and inspiration.

Each of these symbols grants a minor bonus to a character. To gain the benefit of the item, the user must be a cleric with the domain the symbol is tied to as one of his chosen domains. This bonus is treated as an addition to the domain's granted power. All the holy symbols presented here cost 100 gp. They are not magic items and do not take up a slot.

For more specialized holy symbols see "Tokens of Faith" in *Dragon* #327. "Tokens of Faith III" in issue #331 will conclude the series.

Air: No crystal or precious metal seems to hold together this circlet. Made of a wispy, swirling convergence of barely-visible blue and white ribbons, it seems to magically hover over the cleric's brow. The gossamer ribbons feel soft and feather light to the touch. Bearing this circlet grants a cleric a +1 sacred bonus on Jump checks made to perform high jumps.

Death: This symbol is nothing more than a knotted, ashy-white rope the width of a man's finger. The flesh of a cleric who wears the rope around his neck becomes livid and covered with purple and yellow bruises. The bruises seem to change position slowly, as if creeping across the cleric's skin, but they are not painful and disappear if the cleric removes the rope. Whenever the cleric delivers a coup de grace, this holy symbol increases the DC of the save to avoid death by +2.

Good: This silver cuff fits snugly around the wrist. A silver flange protrudes from the cuff to the center of the cleric's palm, where it attaches to a round crystal disk. The crystal seems colorless, but emits waves of rainbow colors in bright light. To display his holy symbol, the cleric must turn his palm upwards. When casting a good spell, this symbol adds +1 sacred bonus on Knowledge (the planes) checks when dealing with evil outsiders.

Plant: This symbol is a chain of leaves made from many different types of trees and worn around the waist. Soft and supple, the living belt's leaves never age or die, but they change from green in the spring and summer to red in the fall and pure white in the wintertime. A cleric wearing this belt gains a +1 bonus on Knowledge (nature) checks when dealing with plants and plant creatures.

Strength: This studded bronze band is worn around the arm. Some clerics wear two, one below the shoulder and one above the elbow, although only one bonus is granted. When the cleric activates his Strength domain power, his arm muscles bulge and ripple mightily. The band's wearer gains a +1 bonus on Strength checks made to resist a bull rush.

Sun: This half-inch-long red, orange, or yellow oval gem adheres magically to the cleric's brow. The gem constantly flashes and glitters while exposed to the sun. A cleric who wears this symbol extends the radius of effect of any spell with the light descriptor he casts by 5 feet.

War: This holy symbol is a rectangular steel plate that the cleric holds to his chest with leather straps (even over his armor). Engravings of battling warriors cover the plate, and whenever the cleric enters combat the engraved figures animate and begin fighting each other. After the cleric has worn this item for 24 consecutive hours, he gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls made to confirm a critical threat while wielding his deity's chosen weapon.

Water: This chain of tiny blue and green beads is long enough for the cleric to loop around his neck several times. The beads, tiny glass spheres filled with both salt and fresh water, rub together to recreate the soft susurrus of the sea. Wearing this symbol allows the cleric to hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to three times his Constitution score.

by Lisa McSherry

HISTORY OF THE DRUIDS

The true origins of the druid are lost in time. A lack of written teachings and their near obliteration by Romans and later conquerors make historical accuracy nearly impossible. However, some druidic teachings survived in bardic colleges in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales and in medieval manuscripts, oral tradition, folklore, and ritual. From this and more recent archeological work, scholars have begun to piece together reliable information.

Druids likely began as an intellectual and religious caste among the tribal peoples of pagan Europe, acting as the custodians of their cultural and spiritual heritage. They practiced their rites in urban shrines and woodland groves, holding the natural world as sacred and honoring certain plants, animals, and bodies of water. Historians generally associate druids with the Iron Age Celtic culture that spread out from central Europe from about 800 to 200 BCE, yet the Gaulish Celts maintained that druid practices originated in Britain. Archaeological evidence suggests that many aspects of Celtic religious practice derived from much earlier traditions. Druids formed the professional class of Celtic society as priests, teachers, ambassadors, astronomers, genealogists, philosophers, musicians, theologians, scientists, poets, and judges. Although the surviving records mention most druid leaders as males, the records also indicate that their societies considered female druids equals of their male counterparts.

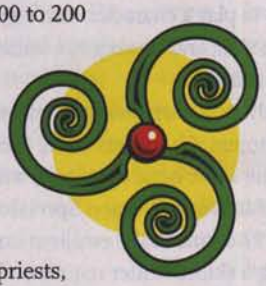
The use of traveling bards and brehons (judge-mediators) allowed the druids to organize an inter-tribal communications network. The Romans discovered this communication caused a great deal of trouble, since the network could warn tribes not yet subjugated of what to expect. In response, Julius Caesar began a policy of killing every druid encountered (except for a few native guides). After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church perpetuated his policy. Thus, by the time of the 7th century CE, druids had been murdered, converted, or driven completely underground throughout the western Celtic lands.

Druids were responsible for all public religious rituals, during which various members of the priestly caste performed music, spoke prayers, made sacrifices, and offered divination. Senior members ensured a rite's exactness. Such rituals required intense supervision to assure their accurate performance, as a mistake would bring enormous danger to the tribe.

Triskele

Druids considered the oak and mistletoe sacred. All religious rituals involved the oak in some manner, and they called mistletoe "the all-healer." They believed in reincarnation, an immortal soul, the sacredness of particular trees, the laws of magic, and a specific relationship between mortals, ancestors, and deities.

The Celtic virtues of honor, loyalty, hospitality, honesty, justice, and courage shaped the druids' moral code. Their two oldest symbols, untainted by later assignations by enemy conquerors and not of modern creation, are the Awen and the Triskele. The Awen is a symbol of Divine Inspiration—that which all Druids strive to receive and transmit. The symbol recalls the druidic fascination with the number three while the word means "inspiration" in Middle Welsh. The Triskele's three arms represents the sun, afterlife, and reincarnation.



Awen

"DRUID" PAST AND PRESENT

The origins of the word "druid" is unknown, although ancient scholars speculated it derived from the Greek name for the oak tree, *drus*. Others see it as a combination of *drus* and *wid*—"to know"—denoting "very wise."

The 18th century saw a revival and transformation of this class into a religion, inspired by a renewed interest in Classical and medieval-Celtic literature and antiquarian studies of ancient sacred sites. This revival had links with non-conformist Christianity, Freemasonry, and revolutionary politics. Today, thousands of people around the world practice a reconstructed religion they call Druidism.

by Jacob Steinmann

THE KNIFER

FIGHTER

Not all warriors fight with swords or axes. Some prefer more subtle and versatile weapons. The dagger fighter, frequently called a knifer, is among the most famous of these warriors.

The knifer's strength is in his versatility. He can fight in all distances of combat, from ranged to grappling, making him a very effective support fighter. He can provide cover fire at range or support heavy fighters in melee. Characters can acquire and conceal daggers easily, which gives the knifer a distinct advantage in urban and political situations.

Building a knifer is a difficult process. Compared to swords, maces, axes, and other martial weapons, the dagger is a sub-optimal choice. If you want a fighter who does damage in the quickest, most efficient way possible, playing a knifer is not the best way to do it. However, if you want to play a character with a great deal of flexibility, skill, and mystique, a knifer makes an excellent choice.

This advice also applies to throwing axes and light hammers. Characters using those weapons can use the same basic strategies, with different Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization feats.

Races: Humans make excellent knifers, as becoming a skilled knifer requires a large number of feats. Halflings and elves, with their bonus to Dexterity, have a natural affinity for the archetype. Half-orcs' high Strength can help compensate for the dagger's normally low damage.

Classes: Fighters can learn the wide variety of feats needed to become a skilled knifer fastest, but knifers might come from other classes as well. The ranger's combat styles are useful and barbarian levels add an unexpected ferocity. Criminal organizations often employ fighter/rogue knifers as enforcers or assassins.

Feats: To be able to bring his weapon to bear effectively at all times, the knifer needs eight particular feats—four ranged, and four melee.

Weapon Finesse often makes sense, as a knifer tends to have a higher Dexterity than Strength. Two-Weapon Fighting helps compensate for the dagger's low damage. Weapon Focus improves the knifer's odds of hitting and opens the way to Weapon Specialization and its greater damage potential.

Among ranged-weapon feats, Point Blank Shot is a must, since it allows many others. Rapid Shot is also vital, as a knifer's main advantage comes from speed. Knifers who work in groups find Precise Shot invaluable when they need to support their companions at a distance. Finally, Far Shot can give the knifer some unexpected range with his attacks.

These feats represent only the beginnings of dagger-fighting. How the knifer uses his weapon of choice alters his other feat choices. Quick Draw, when combined with Rapid Shot, allows a knifer to throw several daggers before taking a 5-foot step into melee. Greater Weapon Focus, Greater Weapon Specialization, and Improved Critical help those knifers who wish to focus on dealing damage. Additionally, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Spring Attack, and Blind-Fighting expand the knifer's combat options.

Roleplaying: Western cultures view the dagger as the weapon of criminals. Knifers often come from poor backgrounds, having taken to the study of the dagger just to survive. Some rise to positions of power, leading gangs through brute strength and force of personality. Former criminals might turn to adventuring in an attempt to atone for their sins, using their skills to defend those they once oppressed.

In parts of Asia, knives and daggers are carried as an everyday tool. Knife fighting is a common experience in some cultures, with techniques being passed down through familial or tribal lines.

In a fantasy world, the dagger might be a common weapon, or considered sacred in some cultures. Some deities, such as Wee Jas, favor the dagger as a weapon, and their worshipers might take up the study of the dagger in their honor.

Determining where your character learned to fight can help answer other questions about his background and personality. Knifers can come from almost any culture, and their religious, political and philosophical views can vary greatly. Ultimately, knifers are about making the unexpected work, and there is no reason you cannot do the same.

Finally, be sure to check out *Complete Warrior* for additional knifer options, including the invisible blade prestige class.

by Rodney Thompson

PRINCIPLES OF THE MONASTIC CODE

MONK

Although much is made of the strict moral codes held by the paladin orders of the world, the codes of conduct laid down by monastic orders are often overlooked. The monk's adherence to her code provides the source of her strength and energy. Monastic codes often contain the following principles, although some orders have differing beliefs that better fit their mission and foundation.

DISCIPLINE THE MIND FOR EXTERNAL SOLIDARITY

This principle is the first and most important principle in many monastic codes. Just as the foundations of a building help strengthen its more visible structures, many orders believe that the mind provides the foundation around which the body is constructed. This means remaining focused on the task at hand, not allowing oneself to be distracted by insignificant goals or trivialities, and clearly cutting through the veils of deception in order to see the truth.

PURIFY THE TEMPLE OF THE BODY

The monk must treat her body as a shrine to her beliefs. Just as the mind forms the foundation upon which the body is built, so does the strength of the body rely on the monk's discipline. The monk must keep her body pure and free of toxins and contaminants. This often means avoiding all narcotics and alcohol, carefully choosing only healthy, nourishing foods, and avoiding any food or drink that might hinder her abilities. Additionally, the monk may only wear clothes and decorations (such as piercings or tattoos) approved by her order.

FORGE ONE'S NATURAL TOOLS AND WEAPONS

A simple extension of the previous principle, this monastic principle decrees that the monk should focus her energy into refining her own natural tools and weapons. This principle is what allows her to harden her body and deal serious damage using only natural weapons such as the hands and feet. In order to exercise this principle, the monk must practice her martial arts, focus on increasing her strength and dexterity, and generally tone her body to provide her with the best possible physical conditioning.

SEE THE WORLD THROUGH ALL EYES

This principle actually has a double meaning. On the one hand, it encourages the monk to look at any situation from all angles. When a problem presents itself, she must look at it not only as a monk, but also as her friends, her enemies, and anyone else who might provide insight into the situation. This principle also encourages the monk to open all of her senses when encountering a challenge; in this case, opening "all eyes" simply means extending her other senses (such as hearing, smell, and touch) to provide her with a more complete picture of the situation.

REMAIN AHEAD OF YOUR ENEMY'S PRESENT

The "enemy's present" refers simply to the current state of the enemy. If the monk remains ahead of her enemy's present, she anticipates her enemy's next move and can react accordingly. This not only applies to combat but also to the grander scheme of adventuring. The monk must strive to anticipate her enemy's next move, even on a grand scale, in order to choose her own path and prepare to make an intelligent counter-move.

CHANNEL KI AS THE BANKS CHANNEL THE RIVER

One of the monk's most mystical traits is her ability to use an energy known as *ki* in order to enhance her natural abilities. This principle emphasizes that *ki* is an energy that the monk directs in order to be truly effective. However, the metaphor extends further. As the banks of the river direct its powerful flow, the river erodes the banks and carves out its bed much in the way the monk herself is shaped by the flow of *ki*. This principle reminds the monk that although a powerful tool, the monk must respect *ki* for the control it exerts over her.

by Alvin Neo

DAYDREAM BELIEVERS

PALADIN

Gnome paladins chuckle at the stereotype of paladins as self-righteous, honor-bound, humorless sticks-in-the-mud, especially when someone thinks it applies to them.

Racial Influence: The gnome mindset blends creativity and whimsy with practicality. Many gnomes become philosophers, artists, inventors, or alchemists. Their fun-loving natures and knack for illusion also make them natural tricksters and pranksters. Gnomes dream big and patiently work toward their ambitions in small, concrete steps.

Ethos: The fun-loving nature of gnomes often manifests in their paladins as a desire to bring joy and hope to others. Like all paladins, they oppose evil and strive to eliminate it. However, they place more importance on bringing good into the world. A gnome paladin's racial inclination toward illusion and trickery often conflicts with her need to act with honor. Many gnome paladins resolve this conflict by speaking the truth at all times and only use their spell-like abilities to entertain or to play harmless tricks. Some have mastered the art of allowing an enemy to reach an incorrect conclusion without telling a single lie.

Roleplaying Tips: Gnome paladins maintain a positive and optimistic outlook, even when the forces of evil seem overwhelmingly strong. They believe evil triumphs whenever someone gives in to depression and despair. Thus, a gnome paladin looks for practical ways to brighten the day of everyone she meets. She might tell a joke to someone who looks sad, share her lunch with a hungry beggar, or climb a tree to rescue a child's kitten. In addition, every gnome paladin dreams of making some significant, positive contribution to the world, such as setting up an orphanage, a hospital for the poor, or even a workshop to make toys for impoverished children. Some jokingly refer to their ambitions as their "Life Quests." A gnome paladin sees her Life Quest as more of a hobby than an obsession. She easily sets it aside when more important matters demand her attention.

Skill Choices: Some gnome paladins take ranks in Perform (comedy) to help them bring laughter to people. Some also take ranks in Craft (alchemy) to capitalize on their racial talent in this area. A gnome paladin's Life Quest might also influence her skill choices. For example, a gnome who plans to set up a hospital might take ranks in Heal.

Feat Choices: Gnome paladins—who often use alchemical weapons and crossbows in combat in order to offset their relatively low Strength scores—should select ranged attack feats such as Far Shot, Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, and Precise Shot. Gnome paladins also frequently take feats from the Mounted Combat feat tree.

Equipment: Gnome paladins favor alchemical weapons, especially if they have enough ranks in Craft (alchemy) to make them cheaply. Many also carry a reach weapon, usually a lance, in case they encounter a giant or some other big creature.

Special Mount: Due to their connection with burrowing creatures, many gnome paladins call for a dire badger special mount when possible. Other gnome paladin mounts might include the black bear, boar, dire eagle (from *Races of Stone*), dire toad (from *Monster Manual II*), dire weasel, and wolverine.

Combat Tips: Durable combatants and hard to hit because of their Small size, gnome paladins do well in the front lines, keeping enemies occupied in melee and away from allied archers and spellcasters. In particular, they ought to draw as many attacks as possible when fighting giants because of their Armor Class bonus against such creatures. When mounted, they favor hit-and-run tactics with alchemical weapons and combinging a charge with smiting evil.

Tweaking the Rules: You might make the following changes to a gnome paladin's class features to emphasize her racial characteristics:

Class Skills: Replace Knowledge (nobility and royalty) with Perform (comedy).

Special Mount (Sp): A 5th-level gnome paladin may summon a dire badger as a special mount. It gains special abilities at the same rate as a standard special mount.

by Richard Pocklington

FLAWS FOR RANGERS

RANGER

Expert outdoorsmen, rugged individualists, and seasoned warriors, rangers seem to have it all. Well, all except some of the social graces needed to fit in well with so-called civilized folk. Unfortunately, some rangers are so dedicated to their wild craft, or so obsessed with the pursuit of their favored prey that they find themselves unsuited for life within city walls, becoming morose or sullen when estranged from the natural world.

Flaws penalize a character in a specific way. Most of these flaws have obvious roleplaying consequences, but they also have game mechanics penalties. The concept of flaws first appeared in *Unearthed Arcana*, but you don't need that book to use the flaws presented here. A character may take up to two flaws, and they must be selected at 1st level. For each flaw you take, your character may select an additional feat. Thus, a 1st-level human character with two flaws may take four feats.

Although designed specifically with rangers in mind, other characters may select from these flaws if they meet the appropriate prerequisites.

BEASTLY [FLAW]

You have more in common with beasts than you do with your own race.

Prerequisite: Wild empathy.

Effect: You are vulnerable to the following list of spells that affect animals, as well as those which affect your own creature type: *animal trance, calm animals, charm animal, dominate animal, hide from animals, hold animal.* Additionally, you suffer a –2 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks except Disguise, Handle Animal, and Use Magic Device. Anyone observing your mannerisms who possesses the wild empathy class ability can recognize this flaw immediately.

FOE SPECIALIST [FLAW]

Your training is so specialized that you have difficulty tracking, predicting, or otherwise interacting with those foes you have not studied in great detail.

Prerequisite: Favored enemy.

Effect: You suffer a –1 penalty on attack rolls, Bluff, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks made against creatures of any kind that isn't one of your favored enemies.

HATRED [FLAW]

You are engulfed by a deep hatred of your chosen foes and you become insensibly enraged in their presence.

Prerequisite: Favored enemy.

Effect: You suffer a –4 penalty to your Armor Class and on attack rolls and skill checks whenever you are not engaged in melee combat with a favored enemy and a favored enemy is close enough that you could engage it.

INDIVIDUALIST [FLAW]

You are committed to a path that requires complete independence from others.

Effect: You suffer a –2 penalty on all attack rolls made using weapons that you have not personally crafted. In addition, the armor check penalty of any suit of armor you wear that you did not craft increases by +1.

TERRAIN SPECIALIST [FLAW]

You were trained to use your abilities in only one type of environment and are uncomfortable and less competent in all others.

Prerequisites: Track, wild empathy.

Effect: Choose one terrain type (aquatic, desert, forest, hills, marsh, mountain, or plains). That is your home terrain, in which you are most comfortable. In all other terrains you suffer a –2 penalty on all wild empathy checks, as well as on Search or Survival checks made to track. You may only use your camouflage and hide in plain sight abilities in your chosen terrain.

WILD [FLAW]

Accustomed only to a free life in the wild, you panic when captured or restrained.

Prerequisite: Survival 1 rank.

Effect: Whenever you are entangled, pinned, or bound, you immediately become panicked. Your fear is alleviated 1 round after you are free of all bonds. Spells and effects that remove fear do not prevent this effect.

by Amber E. Scott

THE STORY SO FAR

ROGUE

Designing a great character ranks as one of the best roleplaying experiences. Sometimes you don't have the time to come up with an equally fantastic backstory, however. When that happens, you might peruse the suggestions presented below and select one that appeals to you or use them as inspiration for creating your own. These vignettes are designed for rogues but can easily be adapted for other classes. Each story has a small optional game mechanic bonus assigned to it that your DM must approve.

FOILED ASSASSINATION

Life is dangerous, so you got into the habit of sleeping with a loaded crossbow beside your bed. This proved fortuitous one night when an assassin let herself into your room and tried to stab you in your sleep. Fortunately, the sound of her footsteps woke you with enough time to grab your crossbow and fire. Missing, you leapt out of bed and the assassin backed you into a corner. You quickly reloaded and fired several times, weaving and ducking as the assassin slashed at you with her knife. Finally you shot her in the throat and she dropped, leaving you panting and bleeding, but alive.

Suggested Benefit: When reloading a crossbow, you gain a +1 dodge bonus to your AC against attacks of opportunity.

THE MASKED AVENGER

Life as a pampered noble youth was good, and you couldn't understand why your older brother always seemed so unhappy. He tried to explain the injustices in your city's laws that caused the poor to suffer, but you just weren't interested—until the night your brother disappeared out of his room. That same night the city guard reported having slain the mysterious Masked Avenger, a vigilante who committed crimes for the benefit of the poor. The connections suddenly became all too clear. When your grief had faded a little, you found your brother's spare outfit hidden in her room and took up the mantle of the Masked Avenger yourself; both to help the poor and to avenge your brother's death.

Suggested Benefit: Your high station in life allows you to quickly access information that others might have difficulty procuring. You make Gather Information checks in half the normal amount of time (1d2+1 hours).

THE MIRROR MAZE

When the circus you traveled with found another carnival already in town, your ringmaster convinced the carnival leader to allow you to share the grounds. The circus soon thought of packing up when its performers started mysteriously vanishing. Your investigations led you to suspect the carnival leader was behind the kidnappings, but before you could act on that knowledge, two strongmen snatched you from your bed. Your captors brought you to the funhouse but you struggled free and ran. What followed was a cat-and-mouse chase through the twisting tunnels and freakish traps of the funhouse, culminating in an intense race to struggle through a mirror-maze of tunnels barely large enough to crawl through. You persevered, escaped, and brought the criminals to justice.

Suggested Benefit: You receive a +1 bonus on Escape Artist checks made to get through a tight space.

ROOFTOP SCRAMBLE

It was a simple job: The mansion was supposedly unguarded and the third story was full of valuable knickknacks. You had barely pocketed a few choice items when a grotesque stone statue came to life and lunged at you. You scrambled out the nearest window and onto the roof but, to your horror, the statue followed you. It was the middle of winter and the frozen rooftops were slippery, but you had no choice. With the loping statue hot on your heels, you ran across the precarious surface and leapt to the next roof. For what seemed like hours the monstrous guardian chased you from roof to roof, and at every moment you felt your feet might give way under you and send you sprawling. It was the monster that slipped first, however, tumbling off a roof and into an alley while you made your breathless escape.

Suggested Benefit: You only have a –3 penalty instead of a –5 penalty when attempting to charge or move your full speed while Balancing.

by Mike Mearls

THE MULTICLASSED SORCERER

SORCERER

The sorcerer is the ultimate specialist. She gains access to a limited spread of spells, but she can cast them many times per day. Some gamers like to think of a sorcerer as the *magic missile* machine gun, but such a simple view is likely to get you into trouble. Most of the time, a sorcerer needs to develop a spread of abilities beyond combat spells in order to survive. Taking levels in a second class is a good way to accomplish this goal, but it comes at a steep price. Sorcerers gain spells at a slower rate than wizards, making it important to gain as much as possible from any spell ability progression level you lose.

As a sorcerer, you gain access to 9th-level spells at 18th level. Thus, unless you are willing to forfeit those spells you had best stick to taking no more than two levels in another class.

Barbarian: The barbarian's bonus speed can help you avoid danger, but its rage ability makes spellcasting impossible while you use it. Sorcerers generally have far too many spell slots available to waste time with a rage. If you want to use Still Spell to wear armor and cast spells, you are best off wearing the heaviest armor you can find, which negates several of the barbarian's useful class abilities (including fast movement).

Bard: A level or two in bard can be a useful investment. Since you probably have a good Charisma score, you are well suited to the bard's talents. Bardic music gives you options against monsters immune to your spells, while the bard's good Reflex and Will saves help keep you out of harm's way. Bards also gain access to a few spells from the cleric list, such as *cure light wounds*. While the bard's casting ability is unlikely to play a major role, it does serve to expand your talents.

Cleric, Druid, and Wizard: Mixing wizard and sorcerer generally leads to a weak character. You usually end up with a PC whose mightiest spell is a few levels lower than that of his single-classed counterpart. The same holds true with druid and cleric. A druid's most powerful abilities come at later levels, by which point you've surrendered access to both class's best spells. Levels in cleric grant you access to turning, but in most cases you'll lack the cleric level needed to affect the undead you face.

Fighter: With the Still Spell feat, you can take advantage of armor without crippling your arcane casting abilities. Since you have a heavy supply of spell slots, you can afford Still Spell's cost or the risk associated with arcane spell failure. Feats such as Precise Shot and Improved Initiative can give you an important edge in a fight, particularly at high levels where he who casts first might win the battle.

Monk: With unarmed fighting ability, evasion, and the best saves in the game, the monk is a good choice for a sorcerer. You can't invest the levels needed to become a significant threat in melee, but you can gain a nice boost to your defensive abilities. Take Improved Grapple as your bonus feat to help protect against creatures with improved grab.

Paladin: If your character is lawful good, this is perhaps the most potent combination you can create. Both classes rely on Charisma to fuel their class abilities. With two levels in paladin you gain the ability to heal, a better base attack bonus, the ability to detect evil, more hit points, and—most importantly—a bonus on all your saving throws equal to your Charisma modifier. While these levels in paladin might not make you a skilled frontline fighter, they make it much easier to survive magical attacks while giving you more flexibility. The paladin's magical abilities can cover up any areas that your limited spell selection cannot handle.

Ranger and Rogue: Both of these classes can work for you if you have a high Intelligence. Otherwise, you might lack the ranks needed to keep the skills they grant you at a useful total bonus. The rogue has a slight edge here, as evasion can save you from powerful area of effect attacks.

Prestige Classes: Check out *Complete Arcane* for some interesting prestige class options that tie in well with the multiclassed sorcerer.

by Tim Hitchcock

SWARM FAMILIARS

WIZARD

The Improved Familiar feat in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* increases a player's options, presenting new familiars that are more advanced and better suited to powerful spellcasters. Those seeking even more dramatic familiars should consider acquiring an entire swarm.

To gain a swarm familiar, you must have the Improved Familiar feat. This permits the following modifications to the standard rules for familiars as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

An animal or vermin swarm becomes a magical beast swarm familiar. Swarms of other types retain their type when they become swarm familiars. Swarms without an Intelligence score, such as vermin, gain an Intelligence score of 1.

Swarm familiars do not gain the ability to speak with others of their kind, and neither the swarm nor its master gains the Alertness feat. Instead, the following special qualities are substituted for those standard familiar abilities.

Granted Abilities: In addition to special abilities gained as a result of standard familiar progression, swarm familiars also bestow the following abilities upon their masters. The swarm's master gains immunity to her familiar's nauseating effect and any of its other special attacks (filth fever, spider poison, and so on) and can occupy the same space as her familiar without suffering penalties. Swarm familiar granted abilities replace the granted abilities listed for improved familiars in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Hive Mind (Ex): Swarm familiars gain a hive mind that connects them to each other by the arcane power of their master. The master gains an empathic link and the ability to share spells with the hive mind of the swarm familiar.

Nonhealing (Ex): When a swarm takes damage, part of it is physically destroyed. Therefore, swarm familiars cannot be healed in the normal manner. Instead, new creatures must be summoned to the swarm to replace those that have died. A *summon swarm* spell "cures" a swarm familiar by replacing dead creatures in the swarm at a rate of 1d6 hit points per caster level. The number of hit points healed in this manner cannot exceed the swarm's maximum hit point total. Only a druid or the wizard to whom the swarm familiar belongs can cure a swarm familiar in this fashion. *Summon swarm* spells used to heal a familiar create no other effect.

The Swarm Familiar table presents appropriate minimum arcane spellcaster levels for acquiring various swarms as familiars.

Note: DMs should note that swarm familiars can be difficult to adjudicate. DMs should be fully versed and comfortable with the concept before allowing a swarm familiar.

SWARM FAMILIARS

Swarm Familiar	Alignment	Type/Subtype	Arcane Spellcaster Level	Source[1]
Spider swarm	Neutral	Vermin	3rd	MM (239)
Bat swarm	Neutral	Animal	5th	MM (237)
Rat swarm	Neutral	Animal	5th	MM (239)
Locust swarm	Neutral	Vermin	7th	MM (239)
Bone rat swarm	Neutral evil	Undead	9th	LM (88)
Centipede swarm	Neutral	Vermin	9th	MM (238)
Corpse rat swarm	Neutral evil	Undead	11th	LM (92)
Emphemeral swarm	Chaotic evil	Undead	11th	MMIII (50)
Swamp strider swarm	Neutral	Vermin	11th	MMIII (171)
Bloodmote cloud	Neutral evil	Undead	13th	LM (88)
Dread bloom swarm	Neutral	Plant	13th	MMIII (45)
Needletooth swarm	Neutral	Animal	13th	MMIII (109)
Hellwasp swarm	Lawful evil	Evil	16th	MM (238)
Shimmerling swarm	Chaotic neutral	Fey	16th	MMIII (152)
Brood keeper larva swarm	Neutral	Magical beast	19th	MMIII (21)

[1] The swarm's base statistics can be found in the listed sourcebook (page number in parentheses). LM stands for *Libris Mortis*, MM stands for the *Monster Manual*, and MMIII stands for *Monster Manual III*.

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Ars Magica 5th Edition
Publisher: Atlas Games
Ars Magica ("The Art of Magic") is the award-winning roleplaying game by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein-Hagen that focuses on wizards who are as powerful as those we know from legend and literature. The rules encourage players to develop their characters over long periods of time, and troupe-style roleplaying allows players to take on the roles of multiple characters, so that the players have equal access to power even though the characters do not.

Mutants & Masterminds: Gimmick's Guide to Gadgets
Publisher: Green Ronin
Game System: d20
Gimmick's Guide to Gadgets builds on the gadget rules for Mutants & Masterminds by introducing two new powers, Spontaneous Invention and Scientific Genius, as well as expanding the device construction rules. The book, designed by fan-favorite Mike Mearls, also includes hundreds of ready-made gadgets that can be dropped right into any Mutants & Masterminds campaign.

Men of the Sea: Sailor Heroes of Glorantha
Publisher: Steve Jackson Games
Game System: HeroQuest
Men of the Sea explores the seas, coasts, and islands of Glorantha through the eyes of sailor heroes. It introduces eight new homelands for heroes, describes the many different ways that sailors worship Dormal the Opener, explores life as a sailor, and provides full rules for applying the HeroQuest rules to sea-borne contests.

Spectre of Sorrows
Publisher: Sovereign Stone Press
Game System: Dragonlance d20 Adventure
Continuing the story begun in Key of Destiny, Spectre of Sorrows is a Dragonlance adventure set in the Age of Mortals after the War of Souls. This adventure can be played as part of the overall Age of Mortals campaign or used by itself. Spectre of Sorrows is written by Christopher Coyle using a story created with author Margaret Weis. It includes new spells, magical items, and creatures!

Gary Gygax's Essential Places
Publisher: Troll Lord Games
Game System: Castles and Crusades
From lowly brothel to exquisite palace, with stops at the gladiatorial arena, gaol, courthouse, cathedral, wizardly college, innumerable shops, many businesses and dozens of other buildings on the way, Gary Gygax's Essential Places provides the game master with detailed descriptions and floor plans of every locale a fantasy metropolis might need. As any designer or writer knows, the devil is in the detail, and Essential Places provides you with the necessary information to forge compelling pieces for the setting of your stories—including maps and templates.

Eberron: Grasp of the Emerald Claw
Publisher: Wizards of the Coast
Game System: Dungeons & Dragons 3.5
This full-length adventure for the newest D&D campaign setting showcases many of the most unique traits of the Eberron setting. It plays out across the Eberron world and is designed to either be a stand-alone adventure or an immediate follow-up to the first and second published Eberron adventures, Shadows of the Last War and Whispers of the Vampire's Blade.

Lost Empires of Faerun
Publisher: Wizards of the Coast
Game System: Dungeons & Dragons 3.5
For the first time, the secrets of past empires of the Forgotten Realms world are chronicled in one comprehensive sourcebook. For players, this book contains new options for characters wishing to delve into ancient ruins, including new feats, prestige classes, magic, and equipment. For Dungeon Masters, this book contains new material associated with ruins, including rules for how to build and sustain a ruin-based campaign, more than a dozen detailed adventure sites with maps, and new monsters and artifacts.

Sandstorm
Publisher: Wizards of the Coast
Game System: Dungeons & Dragons 3.5
This beautifully illustrated supplement contains rules on how to adapt to hazardous hot and arid weather conditions, such as navigating desert terrain and surviving in fierce heat or harsh weather. There are expanded rules for environmental hazards and manipulation of hot weather elements, as well as new spells, feats, magic items, and prestige classes. New monsters associated with deserts and wastelands are included, as well as variants on current monsters. Sandstorm provides enough adventure material included for months of gameplay.

d20 Past
Publisher: Wizards of the Coast
Game System: d20
This new rules supplement provides everything players and gamemasters need to participate in adventures in the time period between the Renaissance and World War II, including new character options and rules for early modern firearms. It provides rules for creating characters and campaigns that blend realism and fantasy. d20 Past also presents alternative campaign models, along with all the rules needed to play swashbuckling pirate adventures, Victorian horror investigations, thrilling Pulp Era escapades, and more, including three ready-to-play campaign modules.

Races of the Wild
Publisher: Wizards of the Coast
Game System: Dungeons & Dragons 3.5
Races of the Wild provides an in-depth look at races that live in the wildest areas of your D&D world. There is extensive information on the classic races of elves and halflings, including new rules, information for interaction, new spells, and new magic items attuned to each race. There is expanded information on sub-races, along with a wealth of cultural information and new prestige classes, feats, equipment, spells, and magic items.
In addition to information on the two major races, a new race is introduced.

Wildwood
Publisher: Bastion Press
Game System: d20
The sundered ruins of lost cities and strangely altered patches of wilderness conceal vast and wondrous earthly treasures, as well as newfound insight on the world's secrets and the machinations of Haiel. Adventurers seeking to wrest mighty artifacts from their owners and unravel the enigma of this primordial domain must face the frightening denizens lurking within the shattered temples and ominous thickets of these forbidden locales. In Wildwood, one mantra reigns supreme: "Survival of the Fittest."

The Book of Iron Might
Publisher: White Wolf
Game System: d20
Any party's strength rests on a foundation of cold steel, mighty thews, and strong hearts. The Book of Iron Might contains a whole new way to look at combat, allowing you to create mechanics for called shots, daredevil stunts, and other thrilling actions on the fly. It also includes three new types of feats, new uses for skills, and an exciting new character race.

Everquest II
Publisher: White Wolf
Game System: OGL
EverQuest II is the continuing story of the hugely successful online gaming phenomenon. Published under the Open Game License, it features a streamlined system that is 100% compatible with Open Gaming material. Sixteen races, 28 character classes, and a new Norrath will appeal to gaming veterans as well as a whole new generation of gamers.

Werewolf: The Forsaken
Publisher: White Wolf
Game System: Storytelling System
Werewolf: The Forsaken, the game of bestial violence and supernatural terror, is the second core setting sourcebook intended for use with White Wolf's new Storytelling System. Werewolves are creatures of original sin, tainted by ancestral crimes and driven to hunt by the shame of being abandoned. This book details what it is to be Forsaken, one of the Tribes of the Moon. Create your own werewolf pack and seek redemption or give in to your savage nature. Hardcover. For use with the World of Darkness Rulebook.

RPGS

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Board and Card Games

Legend of the Five Rings: Web of Lies
Publisher: AEG
Booster Display (48 boosters)
Booster Pack: (11 Cards)
Starter Deck: (84 Cards)
Experience Legend of the Five Rings: Web of Lies and play with Gozoku Personalities that quietly dispose your opponents, use the new Raiding mechanic to steal his resources, or cut opposing forces down with Duelists. Featuring over 150 new cards and Strongholds for the Mantis, Phoenix, Unicorn clans.

Escape Velocity Nova Boxed Set
Publisher: DG Associates
Escape Velocity Nova, from DG Associates, is an expandable card-driven board game based on our popular computer game, EV:Nova! In this game, you will take the role of a trader captain in a vast and dangerous galaxy. This game intricately weaves adventure, trade, political conflict, military tactics, and strategy together to give you the best of what makes Ambrosia's computer game a classic. The boxed set contains everything you need to play a 2-player game including the full color 20 x 20 inch game board, 5 colored playing pawns, an 8-page rule sheet, 16 hostile government markers, and 120 Nova Cards that represent ships, missions, outfits, planets, trade routes, and events that truly bring to life the Escape Velocity: Nova universe.

Ticket to Ride
Publisher: Days of Wonder
Ticket to Ride is a cross-country train adventure where players collect cards of various types of train cars that enable them to claim railway routes connecting cities throughout North America. Set at the dawn of the 20th century, this fun game celebrates the spirit of adventure found during that time period.

Ice Cream
Publisher: Face to Face Games
I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream! Nothing says summertime like a trip to the local ice cream stand. In Ice Cream, you have the chance to demonstrate your business skills by running an ice cream stand. You have just four days to bring in as many customers as you can - will you be the prince of pistachio, the countess of chocolate... or just a drip? Start scooping!

Arkham Horror
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
The town of Arkham, Massachusetts is in a panic. Horrific and bizarre events have begun to occur with increasing frequency—all seeming to point toward some cataclysmic event in the near future. Only one small band of investigators can save Arkham from the Great Old Ones and destruction! Arkham Horror was originally published by Chaosium, Inc. almost two decades ago. This new, updated edition features stunning new artwork and graphical design as well as revised and expanded rules from the game's original creator, Richard Launius! No fan of the Cthulhu mythos will want to miss this opportunity to acquire this classic Call of Cthulhu board game!

Myths and Legends: Brotherhood Base Set
Publisher: Genio
Booster Display (30 boosters)
Booster Pack: (11 Cards)
Starter Display (12 Decks)
Starter Deck: (50 Cards)
Since its debut in 2000, Myths and Legends has been a best seller in its native Chile and Mexico, allowing players to unleash heroes, villains, gods, and monsters from different pantheons in a "mythological world war." Beginners will find Myths and Legends easy to learn and play, while seasoned CCG players will be drawn to the game's strategic depth of play. This initial base set totals 170-cards featuring characters from across a broad spectrum of world mythologies. Future expansions will introduce new mythologies to the game.

Geek Wars Battle for the Con Deck 2: Miniature Wargamer
Publisher: Goodman Games
This hilarious 2-player card game pits geek against geek in a tongue-in-cheek battle for control of Jim Con! Each deck has a different "army" with inside jokes that every gamer will love. Deck 2 focuses on miniature wargamers, poking fun with such cards as "Clicky-Base Clique," "Wargizard Min-Maxer," and "Little Wars Veteran"! Every Geek Wars deck is compatible. You can pit role playing gamers against wargamers, LARPers against furries, or Trekkies against card gamers! Each deck has its own unique set of cards, with special abilities, different troops, and funny options not available in other decks.

La Strada
Publisher: Mayfair Games, Inc.
As the proud owner of a northern Italian trading company, you must dispatch carts and wagons to find new customers for your goods. But times are hard and competition is fierce. Find the best way to reach your goals and bar your opponents from success by building a trade network across the variable board. Your opponents will quickly claim their routes, so plan your strategy with care! Creating the best network and taking the greatest share of the gold is the road to victory in La Strada! Designed by Martin Wallace. For 2-4 players ages 10 and up.

Inuyasha TCG: Kijin
Publisher: Score
Booster Display (12 Boosters)
Booster Pack: (10 Cards)
Introducing new alternate foil Iconic character cards and a new attack color—green—Kijin, the 151-card booster supplement to the Inuyasha TCG, expands gameplay with all new possibilities. Each 10-card booster comes with a rules flier, and is offered in 12-count displays.

Pokemon: Ex Team Rocket Returns Expansion Set
Publisher: Nintendo America
Booster Pack: (9 Cards)
The return of Team Rocket is trouble for your opponents. Jesse and James are back and up to old tricks, with some of the most ruthless Pokemon ever at their side. If you can master Team Rocket's way, their all-new Dark Pokemon and Pokemon-ex can carry you to victory!

All Wound Up: Escape From the Cemetery
Publisher: Twilight Creations
It's boring when you're dead. So, you and your deceased friends have decided to have a little race around the graveyard.... Thus begins the wackiest game from Twilight Creations yet! The players control pawns as usual. But, the pawns in this game are self-propelled, windup toys! Game play determines how many winds you get or if you can change direction. Special areas of the board grant you bonuses for landing on them, and some areas slow you down. The first one out of the graveyard wins.

Yu-Gi-Oh! Rise of Destiny
Publisher: Upper Deck
Booster Display (24 Boosters)
Booster Pack: (9 Cards)
Rise of Destiny ties the old together with the new, bringing back many monsters in new forms. Many of these monsters currently appear on the Yu-Gi-Oh! animated series, allowing Duelists to create decks and themes seen on television. With nine new Machine-type monsters, support for Harpie Lady decks, and anti-Trap monsters to combat your opponent's traps, the world of the Yu-Gi-Oh! TCG will never be the same.

Primordial Soup
Publisher: Z-Man Games
You control a tribe of amoebas living in Earth's past trying to survive in the Primordial Soup. At first, your amoebas drift along, eating the nutrients that are available, but soon you'll have to figure out how to get to the rapidly depleting supply of nutrients before your opponent's amoebas beat you to it. You will purchase rule-breaking Gene cards to give your amoeba capabilities to be the top dog in the Soup. Some of these capabilities include more coordinated movement, longevity, aggression, etc. The player who keeps his amoebas alive and balances the use of his or her Gene cards will reign in the Soup.

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Publisher: Privateer Press

Miniatures

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TMGs and Miscellaneous

Lord of the Rings TMG: Balrog
Publisher: Sabertooth Games
Game System: Lord of the Rings Tradeable Miniature Game
Towering over the heroes of The Lord of the Rings Tradeable Miniatures Game this December comes the Balrog, a fierce 9" tall figure with an impressive wing span of nearly a foot. Its finely-detailed sculpt and monstrous size are sure to strike terror into the hearts of all who see him! Packaged with a new version of Gandalf, this latest in the Premium Line series is a must for collectors and players alike.

Unique Premium Die
This unique 6-sided die was featured in Dragon Magazine. Cast in a cool purple color, these high impact 6-sided dice are packed 5 to an order. Break your square dice habit and have the most unique 6-siders at the table.

Paizo Apparel
Show your colors with these t-shirts featuring your favorite magazines. Made of High-quality Fruit of the Loom® pre-shrunk 100% heavy cotton T's in sizes L, XL, 2XL and 3XL.

TriKing Anachronism
Publisher: TriKing Games
TriKing Games and The History Channel have teamed up to deliver Anachronism; a fast-paced collectible combat game that pits the greatest warriors in history in one-on-one arena battles to the death! Choose from the greatest warriors of all time, including Julius Caesar, Sun Tzu, Spartacus, Alexander the Great, and Genghis Khan, and test them against your opponents using strategy, luck, and the powers of your cards. Mix and match weapons, armor, and gear from across History to give the ultimate warriors the ultimate combos to maximize your attacks and power your way to victory! This two-player starter set features Musashi and Beowulf, plus complete rules, a play mat, and all the components needed for the game.

Mechwarrior: Age of Destruction
Publisher: Wiz Kids
Game System: Mechwarrior
Years of peace have ended and the return of old enemies and new allies has begun. Ace MechWarrior™ pilots command armies of tanks and battle-armored troops on alien planets and conditions. Form alliances with other factions to make their strength your own!

Choose your favorite MechWarrior pilot, pick his Mech, customize its load out, and charge into battle!

Collector's Information
Age of Destruction consists of 141 standard MechWarrior game pieces including 32 infantry, 48 vehicles, 32 non-unique 'Mechs, and 12 unique 'Mechs. There are also 6 super-rare (silver base) 'Mechs and 1 ultra-rare (crimson base) 'Mech. The starter contains 10 pre-selected game pieces including 6 infantry, 2 vehicles and 2 'Mechs, which are not available in boosters.

Pirates of the Crimson Coast
Publisher: Wiz Kids
Game System: Pirates
The CSG smash hit Pirates returns this February with Pirates of the Crimson Coast! French ships join the hunt for gold and glory, new Schooner ships set sail for high adventure, and players must contend with new weather and sea effects such as fog banks and reefs! These new effects add excitement to every Pirates game!

Pirates of the Crimson Coast will also introduce a new constructible element—forts! Built to stand atop existing islands, forts add fun new twists to Pirates. Pirates of the Crimson Coast also adds new rules to increase strategy and options for hard-core buccaneers. All of this in one pack! Each pack still contains everything a player needs to build either two complete ships, or one ship and one fort, treasure, rules, an island card and a die! There are over 62 ships to collect!

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Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

What's a Grecian urn?
Oh, about 20 drachmas an hour.

NOW THAT WAS A GREAT PILLAGING!
THESE "ANCIENT GEEKS"* WEREN'T TOO BRIGHT. I MEAN, WHO WOULD LET A GIANT WOODEN PIZZA FILLED WITH ADVENTURERS THROUGH THEIR GATES?
GEEKS LIKE PIZZA, I GUESS. DID YOU LEAVE ANYONE TO GARRISON THE CITY?
YEAH, WE TOOK CARE OF IT.
CITY OF (COUNSELOR) TROI
*EDITOR'S NOTE: YES, WE KNOW THE GREEKS INVADED TROY. IT'S FUNNIER THIS WAY.
"DEAR HENCH-GUY. KEEP THE CITY SAFE FROM INVASION UNTIL REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE. DON'T FORGET THE PILLAGINGS. SINCERELY, THE COOL PEOPLE YOU WORK FOR." I KNEW GOING TO THE RESTROOM WAS A MISTAKE...
I, ATHENA, DECREE THAT THOU SHOULDST RETURN HOME AS THY WORK VISA HAS EXPIRED. START SWIMMING.
NODWICK'S OCEANIC ODYSSEY LEADS HIM TO ONE UNCHARTED LAND...
AND ORIGINALLY, OUR BOAT TURNED AT THIS ISLAND. DO YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS?
IT'S THAT WAY, BUT I DUNNO HOW FAR.
WHY NOT?
NO DEPTH PERCEPTION. SORRY.
...AFTER ANOTHER.
I AM CIRCE, AN ENCHANTRESS!
OH? WHAT DO YOU DO?
I TURN MEN INTO PIGS!
AREN'T WE PIGS ALREADY?
FOR JOKES LIKE THAT, I BANISH THEE. GET LOST.
JUST SO LONG AS I STAY KOSHER.
HIS JOURNEY HOME LED HIM TO SEEK DIRECTIONS IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD...
WHAT, YOU AGAIN?
SMALL WORLD, HUH? GOT ANY CARTOGRAPHERS MANNING THE INFORMATION DESK TODAY?
...WHICH SENDS HIM BACK TO THE OCEAN...
LOOK, GUYS. I'M REALLY POSEIDON, DISGUISED AS AN OCEAN-GOING HENCHMAN. IT'S ALL PART OF A BIG EPIC MYTH I'M PART OF.
I COULD TALK TO THE POET AND SEE IF HE COULD PUT IN A GOOD ROLE FOR YOU, IF I WERE SO INCLINED...
...AND FINALLY HE COLLAPSES...
YAY, HE'S BACK! YEAGAR SAID YOU'D RUN OFF TO JOIN THE ILLIAD, WHATEVER THAT IS.
BUT WE ALREADY RENTED OUT HIS ROOM.
FRET NOT. MY VACATION'S OVER, ANYWAY.
THERE'S A SIX-HEADED MONSTROSITY ON THE FRONT LAWN WITH WHAT LOOKS LIKE A SCRIPT. WHAT GIVES?
HOMER SWEET HOMER, I GUESS.

DORK TOWER®
BY JOHN KOVALIC
MYTHS about ROLEPLAYING and ROLEPLAYERS
MYTH ONE: ROLEPLAYING IS ONLY A HOBBY FOR AWKWARD, WHITE MALES.
YOU'RE A GUH.... GUH...GUH...GIRL!
REALITY: THE DIVERSITY OF ROLEPLAYING HAS BEEN GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS.
MYTH TWO: ROLEPLAYING TAKES AWAY FROM KIDS' SCHOOL TIME, MAKING THEM WORSE STUDENTS.
ME NO STUDY SO...GOOD.
— ME CAST SPELL NOW...
REALITY: ACCORDING TO STUDIES, ROLEPLAYERS DO BETTER IN SCHOOL THAN AVERAGE STUDENTS.
MYTH THREE: ROLEPLAYING IS THE PASTTIME OF LOSERS WHO NEVER ACHIEVE ANYTHING WITH THEIR LIVES.
CAN I TELL YOU ABOUT MY FIFTH LEVEL DWARVEN FIGHTER?
SNARK SNARK SNARK...
REALITY: PROMINENT GAMERS INCLUDE THE LIKES OF CURT SCHILLING, ROBIN WILLIAMS, VIN DIESEL, AND WIL WHEATON.
MYTH FOUR: DUNGEON MASTERS ARE PETTY, VINDICTIVE TROGLODYTES WHOSE ONLY AIM IS TO MAKE LIFE MISERABLE FOR THEIR PLAYERS...
BLARGH! DROOL! SLOBBER!
OK. THE BASIC IDEA FOR THE LIST WAS A GOOD ONE, BUT NOW YOU'RE JUST GETTING SELF-SERVING...
"...HANDSOME, BRILLIANT HEROES WHOSE SACRIFICE AND SELFLESS DEVOTION TO THEIR GAMING GROUPS OFTEN GOES UNNOTICED... IS "BRILLIANT" ONE "L" OR TWO...?
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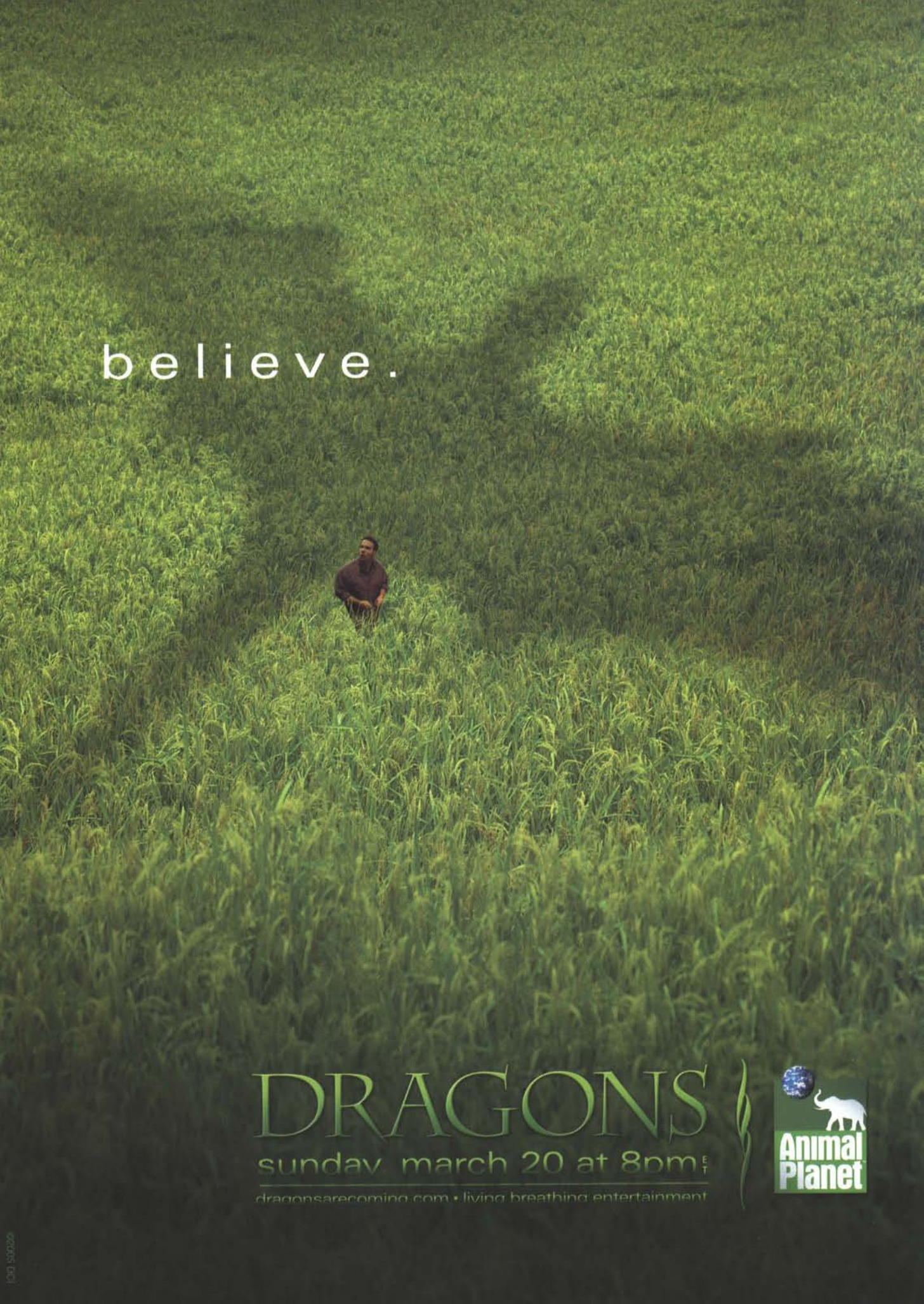
?!
AS I AM DYING... SO MAY YOU... UNLESS YOU HEED.. MY CRYPTIC CLUE... OPEN THE —
ZOGONIA
BY tony
SHUT YER WORMHOLE, BIRD-HEAD!
KEV, CHECK THE CREATURE FOR WEAPONS! EXTRA-THOROUGH.
AYE AYE.
TONY MOSELEY © 2005 WWW.ZOGONIA.COM
HE APPEARS UNARMED.. ...BUT HE'S DYING FROM A MORTAL WOUND.
WaH!
BIRD-PERSON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AND WHY ARE YOU DYING?
LISTEN... }KOFF KOFF: CL--CL-- CLUUUE..
WHAT?
"KLOO." IT'S THE GOBLIN WORD FOR TEAPOT.
TEAPOT, HUH? SO YOU WERE GUARDING A TEAPOT... A MAGICAL TEAPOT, OBVIOUSLY... AND.. WHAT? A MONSTER ATTACKED YOU AND STOLE IT?
...uh.. ..TEAPOT?
WHAT EXACTLY DOES THE TEAPOT DO?
WHAT COLOR IS IT?
TOO LATE. HE IS DEAD.
CRIPES! THAT WAS LAME! I WISH WE'D COME ACROSS SOMEBODY WHO'D TELL US SOMETHING USEFUL FOR A CHANGE!!!
YEH!
SOOO... WHAT NOW, DOMATO?
WHAT ELSE? WE GO LOOKING FOR THE TEAPOT!
end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